A History of Christianity in India

From early times to St. Francis Xavier
A. D. 52–1542

George Mark Moraes

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A HISTORY OF
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

[*E. R. Hambye, S.J.*]

Kartika Palli Church—main altar (now Jacobite)

A HISTORY OF
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

From early times to St. Francis Xavier: A. D. 52–1542

GEORGE MARK MORAES

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To

my son Conon

who is no more.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSOAS	:	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*
CAH	:	*Cambridge Ancient History.*
CE	:	*Catholic Encyclopedia.*
CHI	:	*Cambridge History of India.*
DIAMPER	:	*Synodo Diocesano da Igreja e Bispado de Angamale. Archivo Portuguez Oriental, Fasciculo IV, pp.* 283-575. *English translation by Geddes, Michael, "The History of the Church of Malabar," pp.* 89-435. (*London:* 1694)
DI	:	*Documenta Indica.*
DTC	:	*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique.*
EI	:	*Epigraphia Indica.*
HE	:	*Historia Ecclesiastica.*
IA	:	*Indian Antiquary.*
IC	:	*Islamic Culture.*
JA	:	*Journal Asiatique.*
JBBRAS	:	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
JBORS	:	*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.*
JIH	:	*Journal of Indian History.*
JNSI	:	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.*
JRAS	:	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
KSP	:	*Kerala Society Papers.*
NC	:	*Numismatic Chronicle*
OP	:	*Oriente Portuguez.*
PO	:	*Patrologia Orientalia.*
QJMS	:	*Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society.*

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GEORGE MARK MORAES

PREFACE

ON THE OCCASION of the fourth centenary of the death of St. Francis Xavier on December 3, 1952, I published a brochure on that great Saint and missioner, based on documents which had been published a few years before. As I was engaged in my research on this subject, the idea dawned on me that a study of the period preceding his times was possible.

Owing to the lack of published material, the lacunae in our knowledge of the history of Christianity during this period had long remained unfilled. But there was a corpus of material, brought to light by keen minds and industrious investigators like the late Fr. H. Hosten, the late Mr. T. K. Joseph, Dr. P. J. Thomas, and Mr. K. N. Daniel, on the Syrian Church, lying scattered in journals of Indian history. A flood of light had been thrown on the Portuguese missionary activity prior to the arrival of St. Francis Xavier, by the publication of primary source material in the volumes of the *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente* by Dr. António da Silva Rego. An attempt could now be made to fill in the lacunae.

It is therefore truly remarkable that I should have chanced to meet Fr. Jacques Lahache, the Catholic Chaplain of the University of Strasbourg, of whom I had never heard before, in the Vatican Gardens, and that this fortuitous meeting should have resulted, through his good offices, in my being invited by no less a scholar than Professor M. Simon, Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Strasbourg, to work on this subject. I am grateful to Providence for the meeting with Fr. Lahache and for leading me to a professor who is a towering authority on the early history of the Church, and now, for the opportunity of publishing my work, on the eve of a momentous event in the history of Christianity in India—the 38th International Eucharistic Congress—at the instance of my friend Mr. P. C. Manaktala.

The pages that follow are substantially the work I wrote at Strasbourg. In this volume is presented the history of the Church from the earliest times to the arrival of St. Francis Xavier, incorporating the results of a critical study of the sources, most of which have been published only during the last decade.

The Prolegomenon speaks of the relations between India and the West in antiquity, which is an essential preliminary for the discussion of the problems connected with the apostolic tradition. The two chapters that follow give what little we know of the history of the ancient Syrian Church and the St. Thomas Christians from apostolic times to the thirteenth century. My interpretation of the apostolic tradition is entirely new, based as it is upon certain details, archaeological and others, that had perhaps escaped the attention of earlier scholars. The third chapter describes the Latin Mission of Friar Jordan of Sévérac, the apostolic Frenchman, to whose labours we owe the planting of the Catholic Church in India. The three succeeding chapters tell the story of the efforts of the Portuguese at evangelization, while the chapter on social medicine is devoted to the scientific work turned out in the hospitals flourishing under Christian auspices. The last chapter describes the image of India in the minds of Christian missioners and laymen. The conclusion strikes a balance between the Christian achievements and failures during the period.

Although the work was done at considerable financial sacrifice, my burden was lightened by Professor Simon, first with a scholarship of the University and then of the Government of France through the Ministry of Education; by Professor Mousnier, Patron of my supplementary thesis; by the interest taken by His Lordship Mgr. Weber, Bishop of Strasbourg, and by Canon Eber. To all these, and to Fr. Lahache, I wish to express my deep debt of gratitude. I am equally grateful to the Directors, J. N. Tata Endowment, and, in particular, to Mrs. Peroja Vesugar, and to Professor R. D. Choksi; to the Directors, N. M. Wadia Trust, and in a special way to Sir Rustom Masani, all of whom, with a substantial grant, enabled me to undertake the trip to Rome, and so secure the D. Litt. degree of the University of Rome. I am also thankful to Fr. A. M. Coyne, S. J., for his moral support and encouragement.

I wish to place on record my indebtedness to M. Roth, of the Library, University of Strasbourg, for his unstinting assistance in going through Migne's *Patrologia*.

Here, in Bombay, where I have revised my work, I am grateful for all the facilities given to me by Mr. D. N. M. Marshall, Librarian, and Mr. B. Anderson, Deputy Librarian, University of Bombay; Mr. D. G. Bell, Librarian, Elphinstone College; and Mr. P. R. Sathe,

Librarian, Asiatic Society of Bombay.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, and in particular to Mr. M. V. Deo, Secretary, and Mr. V. B. Parulkar, Deputy Secretary, for facilities afforded to me in the Elphinstone College.

I am deeply grateful to my friend and postgraduate student, Lavinio das Chágas-Souza, and to Jayant Manaktala, an old student of mine, for their valuable assistance in the production of the book.

I owe much to the kindly indulgence and sympathy of Principal P. S. Rege, Elphinstone College, Bombay. For all that he has done, and is doing for me, I cannot thank him sufficiently. The success of this undertaking is in a large measure due to the deep affection of my mother, the unflagging devotion of my wife and the courageous support they received, during my absence in Europe, from my son Conon, who very much longed to see this book in print.

The Elphinstone College,
October 29, 1964.

GEORGE MARK MORAES

PROLEGOMENON

INDIA AND THE WESTERN WORLD IN ANTIQUITY

It is the tradition of the Universal Church that India was evangelized by two immediate disciples of Christ—St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew.[1] Recent research has tended to confirm this tradition, though its historicity is still called in question in certain quarters. This suspicion is based on the belief that in ancient times the West is likely to have known little about India, a belief which is strengthened by the confusion made by later writers in the use of the terms "India" and "Parthia."

And yet, it is an established fact that even before the dawn of history there was considerable intercourse between the Indian sub-continent and the Western world. The chalcolithic civilization, which has been laid bare in the Indus Valley, bears so striking a resemblance to the contemporary civilizations of Sumer and Asia Minor as to force one to the conclusion that this pre-Aryan civilization formed part of an extensive culture which embraced not only north-western India and Mesopotamia, but also pre-Aryan Iran and some other parts of Asia as well.[2] It spread westwards into Europe in due course and brought the Mediterranean region within the sphere of its influence.[3] It is also undisputed that the Aryans entered India from the West.[4] This intercourse seems to have continued unbroken down to Buddhistic times. There is reference in the *Jātaka*, or birth stories of the Buddha, to Indian merchants called the *Panis* who traded with Baberu or Babylon, by which name Sumer had then come to be known.[5] The Phoenicians too carried on direct trade between India and the West. We are told in the Bible that Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his fleet

[1] See Bibliography under Migne, Cureton and Eusebius.

[2] Grousset, *Histoire de l'Estreme Orient*, t. I, pp. 4-5.

[3] Richards, *Sidelights on the Dravidian Problem* and *Some Dravidian Affinities*. The author maintains the identity of the Dravidians with the Mediterranean race.

[4] Ghosh, "The Aryan Problem," *The Vedic Age*, vol. I, chap. X, pp. 201-12.

[5] No. 333 of the *Jātaka Collection*.

of "ships of Tarshish" from Ezion Geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba in the Red Sea, to fetch ivory, apes, and peacocks from the port of Ophir to decorate the palaces and the Temple of king Solomon.[6] Ophir was the ancient port of Sopara, now a suburb of Bombay in Western India, which occupied the same position as Bombay in our times does in being the commercial capital of the country.[7]

India was brought into political relationship with the West when, on the establishment of the empire of the Achaemenids in Iran, Cyrus the Great pushed his eastern conquests as far as the slopes of the Hindu Kush on the north-west frontier of India between 558 and 530 B.C. Darius consolidated these conquests and extended the boundaries of the empire further to the east between 517 and 509 B.C. In his inscriptions of Persepolis and Nakshi-Rustum, Darius includes India along with Gaṇdhāra and Sattgydia among the provinces reduced by his army, and tributary to him.[8] Darius ordered an exact survey of the provinces in order to establish a fair and equitable distribution of taxes based on varying degrees of fertility of the soil. And it fell to the lot of the Indian province to make the heaviest contribution in the form of gold-dust which was valued at 4,680 Eubic talents, or a million pounds sterling in round numbers.[9] By his order his admiral, the Greek Scylax, explored the Indus as far as its mouth and, following the old route used by the Phoenicians, made his way home by the Red Sea, reaching Arsinae, the modern Suez, after a voyage lasting two and a half years.

There was constant intercourse between India and the rest of the Achaemenid empire, which stretched from the Punjab to the shores of the Mediterranean. Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) employed Indian troops when he invaded Greece in 480 B.C. and Greek officials and mercenaries served in various parts of the Achaemenid empire, including the Indian province.

India was brought into direct contact with Europe when Alexander the Great who, overrunning Iran, marched into the Punjab to reduce this easternmost province of the Achaemenid empire.

[6] I *Kings*, IX, 28 and X, 22.

[7] Kane, "Notes on the Ancient History and Geography of the Konkan," *Proceedings and Transactions of the First Oriental Conference*, pp. 364-92.

[8] *CAH*, vol. IV, p. 183.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 198-99.

And the descriptions of India, written by his companions Nearchus, Onesicritus and Aristobolus, based as they were on first-hand knowledge of the country, helped to replace older accounts by Herodotus and others and influenced Western ideas about India for many centuries.

On Alexander's death in 323 B.C., the remnants of his empire in Asia were gathered together by Seleucus Nicator, his greatest general, who founded in Syria one of the most gifted of ancient dynasties. In 304 B.C., when he had sufficiently consolidated his position, Seleucus invaded the Punjab, which had in the meanwhile been liberated from Greek rule by Chandragupta, the founder of the Maurya empire. He met with resistance from Chandragupta and was glad to come to terms with him. A treaty was cemented by a matrimonial alliance between the Indian king and a Greek princess, which paved the way for a long and intimate intercourse between the two courts. Seleucus sent an ambassador named Megasthenes to the court of Chandragupta at Pāṭaliputra where he spent a number of years. Megasthenes wrote a detailed account of India, and the information given by him received no material addition until the last years of the fifteenth century, when the epoch-making discovery of the sea-route by Vasco da Gama threw open the gates of India to the West.

Biṅdusāra, the son and successor of Chandragupta, maintained equally friendly relations with Syria. Megasthenes was probably succeeded at Pāṭaliputra by Daimachus of Plataea, who went on a series of missions to Biṅdusāra. On one occasion Biṅdusāra requested Seleucus to send him figs, wine, and a Sophist to teach him to argue, and received the witty response from Seleucus that while he had pleasure in sending the figs and the wine as desired, he regretted that it was not good form among the Greeks to trade in Sophists.

Under Aśoka, India's philosopher-king—the son of Biṅdusāra—who strove to outlaw war and bring about world peace, the diplomatic relations were naturally extended so as to include besides Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus. Aśoka had been struck with remorse at the sight of so much blood which had been shed in the course of his Kalinga campaign. He became a convert to Buddhism, which appealed to him on account of its pacifist doctrines; and with the proverbial zeal of a convert, he

not only promoted its propaganda in his own dominions, but dispatched missioners to all countries, including the Hellenistic kingdoms just spoken of, to spread its gentle teachings among all the nations of the world.[10]

In the lifetime of Aśoka, Diodotus, the governor of the province of Bactria, had broken away from the Seleucid empire to found the dynasty of the Bactrian Greeks. About the same time Parthia also had become independent. After the death of Aśoka and the break-up of the Maurya empire, Euthydemus, the third king of the line, sent his son, Demetrius, in 185 B.C., to conquer that part of India to the east of the Hindu Kush. The campaign proved successful, and while Demetrius subjugated the Indus Valley, his able lieutenants, Apollodotus and Alexander, reduced Rajputana and Sagala (i.e., Sialkot between the Chenab and the Ravi). Apollodotus advanced south-west as far as Kathiawar and Gujarat and, being appointed governor of the province, he established his headquarters at Ujjain. Menander, proceeding eastwards, penetrated into the heart of the Maurya empire, and was appointed governor of the eastern part of the Bactrian kingdom. Shortly after these successes, however, Demetrius was killed and Bactria was seized by Eucratides, whereupon the Indian governors made themselves independent.[11] After the death of Apollodotus, Menander took possession of his province, and acquired such widespread reputation that, according to a tradition recorded by Plutarch, when he died various cities contended for the honour of giving sepulchre to his ashes.[12]

By this time, however, the Greeks in their Indian conquests had become thoroughly Hinduized, and Menander was himself converted to Buddhism. This event is recorded in the famous work, the *Milanda-panha*, or *Questions of Milinda*, a kind of philosophical dialogue in Pali, between the king and the sage Nāgasena, who ultimately converts him. Menander and his successors issued coins in bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Kharoshthi, which is sufficient proof that the language of Homer was cultivated on the banks of the Indus alongside the local language. But the enduring memorial of the Greek rule is the Gaṇdhāra school of art in which

[10] Rawlinson, "India in European Thought and Literature," *Legacy of India* (ed. G. T. Garrett), p. 10.

[11] Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 140-67.

[12] *CHI*, vol. I, p. 551 ; Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 123.

the techniques of Graeco-Roman art are applied to Buddhist subjects with considerable success. So far Indian art had not yet dared reproduce the traits of the One who had already entered the Nirvāṇa or definite extinction. With an anthropomorphism so instinctive to the Greek mind which revelled in giving concrete form to abstract ideas, the Greeks soon idolized the traits of the Indian sage, as some time later they did those of the Saviour. And just as they found the prototype of the Good Shepherd in their picture of Hermès Criophorus, so did they create the first image of the Buddha from their idea of Apollo. The image was ornamented with the *usnisa* or turban of hair developing into a cranial protuberance from the point of the *ūrṇa* between the eyes, and surprisingly enough, with the nimbus as well, but preserving all the qualities of Apollo's vigour. This Graeco-Buddhist art extended over Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman periods and the extant specimens are worthy of the art studios of Alexandria, Pergamum, and Rhodes.[13]

The Greeks were gradually supplanted by the Parthians as rulers both in Afghanistan and in the Punjab. It is not possible to say when exactly the irruption of the Parthians into India took place. The earliest Parthian inscription in the Punjab is dated in the year 58[14] of an era which the invaders had brought with them to their new conquests. Three different dates have been suggested by scholars as the initial year of this era, none of which,

[13] Foucher, *Art Gréco-Buddhique*, vol. II. There is a figure on a coin of Maues, seated cross-legged with both the hands folded on the thighs in the usual yogic style. When carefully examined, it leaves no doubt that the seat is covered with a handful of grass. This evidently represents the Buddha before his enlightenment, who according to the *Jātaka-aṭṭha Kathā-nidana* when he was going to take his seat on the *Vajrāsana*, before his enlightenment, was offered by a grass-cutter named Sothiya eight handfuls of grass to cover the seat with and that the future Buddha thankfully received the grass, spreading it on the seat before sitting. This is the earliest datable Buddha figure which antedates those appearing on the Kushan coins, which were so far supposed to be the earliest, by a century and a half. Altekar, "Buddha on Indo-Scythian Coins," *JNSI*, vol. XIV, pp. 52-53. This shows the continuation of a process to represent the Master in human form on the part of the Parthians—which must have already begun under the Graeco-Bactrian kings. Basham, "A New Study of the Śaka-Kuśāṇa Period," *BSOAS*, vol. XV, p. 95.

[14] Maira inscription. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *The "Scythian" Period*, p. 326.

however, would appear to meet the requirements of the case.[15] But we know that the expansion of the Parthian power into India could have taken place only in the reign of Mithradates II (124-88 B.C.). He is known not only to have retrieved the losses suffered during the reigns of his two predecessors, but also to have made fresh acquisitions of territory.[16] It is possible that his annexations in India were accomplished under the leadership of Maues,[17] whom he presumably appointed as his viceroy in his new conquests. But Maues did not continue long in this position. For during the weak rule of the successors of Mithradates, Maues would appear to have declared his independence. For the moment, however, he was content merely with the title "king," calling himself "Basileus" in the coins which he struck by virtue of his royal prerogative.[18] But the power of the Arsacids was apparently beyond recovery, and when Maues found that the weak representative of the Arsacids in Persia was afraid to use the imperial title of his house,[19] Maues boldly assumed the title "king of kings." He also set the style which was followed by all his successors of issuing coins bearing legends in two languages, Greek on the obverse and Kharoshthi on the reverse, in keeping with the prevalent usage in the part of India where he had established himself. He is very probably to be identified with the "Great king Moga" mentioned in a copper-plate inscription dated in the year 78[20] of the same Parthian era which is mentioned in the

[15] The establishment of the Śaka kingdom in Seistān is assumed by both Rapson and Tarn as the starting-point of the era, an event which, according to the former, took place in 150 B.C. and, according to the latter, in 155 B.C. This settling of the Śakas in Seistān under Mithradates I is refuted by Thomas who points out that Darius in his rock-inscription already mentions the Śakas in Seistān (=Śakastāna); *JRAS*, 1906, pp. 181-200. Dr. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw believes 129 B.C. is the initial year of this era, making the invasion of Bactria by the Yüeh-Chih its starting-point. But why should the Parthians have accepted the era of a people with whom they were not very friendly is nowhere made clear by this author.

[16] In the reign of Mithradates I the boundaries of the Parthian empire had been pushed as far as the slopes of the Hindu Kush. They were enlarged in the reign of Mithradates II. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[17] Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

[18] *CHI*, vol. I, p. 586. Rapson's list.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 569. "In Parthia itself," says Rapson, "the title remained in abeyance during the interval from 88 to 57 B.C. which separates the reigns of Mithradates II and III."

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 570.

inscription of the year 58. This inscription was issued from Takshaśila, which was probably his capital. The evidence of this inscription as well as the provenance of his coins goes to show that his kingdom consisted of the stretch of territory made up of the territories he had wrested from the Greeks of Kabul and the East Punjab, i.e., Pushkalavati to the west of the Indus and Takshaśila to the east.[21]

Maues was succeeded by Vonones, who continued to use the imperial titles. During his rule the boundaries of the Parthian kingdom seem to have been further extended, since he found it necessary to associate with himself princes of the blood royal in the government.[22] These princes were naturally his closest relatives, and were allowed the prerogative of minting coins in the part of the country under their administration. In their coins they usually inserted their own names in the Kharoshthi legend on the reverse while reserving the Greek legend on the obverse for the king. These coins give the names of Spalahora, the king's brother (who also calls himself by Greek variants of his name, viz., Spaliris, Spalirises and Spalirisa), and of his son Spalagadama.[23]

The successful rule of Vonones probably ended *c.* 50 B.C.—a limit which is indicated by the appearance of a new epigraphic device in the coins of his successor Spalirises, by which name it is usual to call Spalahora. This device was the square form of the Greek *omikron* in place of the old round form of the same to be seen on the coins of Maues and Vonones. This new form of *omikron* is first met with on the coins of Orodes II of Parthia, who ruled from 57 to 38 B.C.[24] And since the two Parthian states were close neighbours, it is thought that the square *omikron* made its appearance in India in the course of the next few years.[25] It

[21] We give the period from 88 to 50 B.C. to the two reigns of Maues and Vonones. The last date of Maues himself, however, cannot be determined.

[22] Rapson says "Vonones ruled conjointly with his brother, Spalahores, and with his nephew Spalagadamas." The word "conjointly" would, however, indicate equal rank, which would be appropriate if they bore the same titles. The distinctive style of "king's brother" applied to Spalagadama is clear indication of subordinate position, which, of course, is not questioned by Rapson, *CHI*, vol. I, p. 574.

[23] *CHI*, vol. I, pp. 589-91.

[24] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 350.

figures for the first time in the coinage of Spalirises, whose accession to the throne may, therefore, be fixed *c.* 50 B.C.[26]

The coins of Spalirises also show a great resemblance to those of king Hermaeus of Kabul,[27] a circumstance which has been interpreted as an indication that the kingdom of Kabul passed from the Greeks to the Parthians.[28] This interpretation, however, is not borne out by facts. For, among the kings of his dynasty, Spalirises is the only one who appears on his coins shorn of his imperial title of "king of kings,"[29] which would not have been the case if he had actually achieved a result which two of his very able predecessors had failed to realise. The loss of his imperial titles is perhaps to be explained with reference to the vigorous foreign policy of his Arsacid contemporary Odores II. The latter was so far successful that he even inflicted a crushing defeat on Crassus in 53 B.C., near Carrhae.[30] It is possible that after settling his scores with Rome, Odores II turned his attention to the Indo-Parthian kingdom whose representatives had been flaunting the Arsacid title "king of kings." And rather than be embroiled in a losing war with a powerful neighbour, Spalirises may have thought it prudent not to use the offending title he had borne for some time

[26] It may be noted here that Spalirises is altogether omitted from the chronology adopted by Dr. Van Lohuizen-De Leew. For while she says she "accepts 50 B.C. as the 'terminus ante quem' of Vonones" (p. 351), and concludes that "Azes must have reigned about that time, for instance 50-30 B.C.," (p. 350), Spalirises is squeezed in between Azes and Vonones without specifying the period of his rule in the omnibus sentence: "So one thing and another tallies with the dates proposed by us for the kings Azes, Spalahora and Vonones" (p. 351).

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 350. The house of Eucratides whose possessions had now come to be limited to the upper Kabul valley.

[28] *CHI*, vol. I, p. 574.

[29] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 344. Coins associating him with Azes, in which Spalirises is styled merely as "Basilcon" on the obverse, and Azes "Maharaja," on the reverse. The inference of Rapson: "Vonones was evidently still reigning as Great King of Kings at this time," (*CHI*, vol. I, p. 573), is unacceptable for the simple reason that, as he himself puts it: "In eastern Iran (i.e., in the Indo-Parthian kingdom) the 'King of Kings' and the prince of his family who was associated with him in the government issued coins bearing the names of both—the former in Greek on the *obverse*, and the latter in Kharoshthi on the *reverse*." This rule is followed so rigidly that the coins enable us to frame the genealogy of this dynasty without difficulty.

[30] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

after his accession.[31]

This position must have continued throughout the reign of Odores II. But Azes, the son and successor of Spalirises,[32] again started assuming the imperial title—a fact which is explained by the course of events in the history of the Arsacids. For it is known that Phraates IV (37-2 B.C.), who succeeded Odores II, was able to maintain his position only for seven years. As Dr. Lohuizen-De Leeuw rightly remarks :

> According to Justinus he was banished by the Parthians on account of his cruelty. Tiradates who was made king in his stead, was forced to retire about 30 B.C. or according to Justinus 25 B.C. so that the reign of Phraates IV must have been a series of riots. . . . He was at last murdered by his son Phraataces (2 B.C.—A.D. 4), who was banished by the nobles who raised Orodes III (A.D. 4-6) to the throne, but he also was murdered. After a time of civil war and turbulence Vonones I, the eldest son of Phraates IV, ascended the throne in A.D. 8, but he was shortly chased away by a rebel, Artabanus III.[33]

We may take it that Spalirises's reign lasted upto 30 B.C. or thereabouts i.e., till the time when the power of the Arsacids had been preserved intact, and that the troubles which started thereafter enabled Azes, who must have just then succeeded his father, to reassume the imperial titles. The duration of Spalirises's rule upto 30 B.C. is also confirmed by the similarity, which has already been referred to, between the coins of Spalirises and Hermaeus, who ruled from *c.* 50 to 30 B.C.[34] This similarity is to be attributed to the characteristics of the style of the coinage current during the period in the region where the kingdoms of both were situated and would thus show that they were contemporaries.

Azes who thus came to the throne *c.* 30 B.C. seems to have had the longest reign in the annals of Indo-Parthian history, a fact to which the diversity of style of Azes's coins, and their great number,

[31] *CHI*, vol. I, p. 591. Rapson's list.

[32] The relationship of Azes to Spalirises is not expressed in the Kharoshthi legends ; and in such cases it seems to be assumed that the junior is the son of the senior. *CHI*, vol. I, p. 573.

[33] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-43.

[34] Tarn, *op. cit.*, pp. 338, 497. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 350

both bear witness. In fact, this very circumstance has tempted scholars to distribute these coins among three rulers—Azes, Azilises, and Azes II.[35] But it is evident that they belong to one and the same person, the name Azilises being merely the diminutive form of Azes, corresponding to Spalirises from Spaliris. It should also be remembered that Azes's name appears under both these forms in the legends on the very same coins, bearing one and the same title—that of "king of kings"—which would not have been the case if the persons indicated were different, viz., king and prince.[36]

The reign of Azes was also successful in that it was under him that the last remnants of the Greek kingdoms of Kabul and East Punjab were annexed to Indo-Parthia. This may be inferred from the fact that Hermaeus was almost the last Indo-Greek king known to history.

Azes was succeeded by Gondophernes. Though the latter was not associated with Azes, as Azes himself had been with Spalirises, in the government, in conformity to the rule which Vonones had set up, there is sufficient evidence that Gondophernes was Azes's immediate successor. For one thing, we know from the coins of both that they had the same Strategos or General, Aspavarman, son of Indravarman, in their service.[37] For another, the archaeological strata in which the coins of the two are found succeed each other, thus pointing to immediate sequence.[38] The year of his accession is supplied by the Takht-i-Bāhī inscription which is dated in the twenty-sixth year of his reign on the fifth day of Vaiśakha in the year 103. The era is again unspecified; but the specification of the date in a Hindu month makes it clear that the year is according to an Indian era. And until the existence of another era is proved, it is to be assumed that this local era was the *Vikrama samvat* commencing from 58 B.C.—an era which, as Dr. J. F. Fleet observed long ago, was then well-established, and "is emphatically the historical era of Northern India."[39] Of

[35] *CHI*, vol. I, p. 572; Marshall, "The Date of Kanishka," *JRAS*, p. 979; Whitehead, *Catalogue of the Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*, vol. I, p. 93.

[36] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-49.

[37] *CHI*, vol. I, pp. 577, 590. Rapson's list.

[38] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, pp. 351-52. He may also have belonged to another dynasty.

[39] Fleet, *St. Thomas and Gondophernes*, p. 232.

course, in the absence of astronomical data, the date cannot be verified. Nevertheless, it is wrong to pretend, as Dr. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw does in her doctoral dissertation,[40] in spite of the evidence to the contrary, that the Takht-i-Bāhī inscription is dated in the selfsame era as the Takshaśila copper-plate inscription, which is dated in a Parthian month.[41] Now the year 103, according to the Vikrama era, corresponds to A.D. 46, giving A.D. 19 as the year of his accession, a year which is in agreement with the chronology we have arrived at independently of the evidence of the Takht-i-Bāhī inscription.[42] The long rule of Azes may be explained, in addition to the reason already given, by the fact to be inferred from numismatic evidence that Azes came to the throne while quite young. Spalirises, who on his accession had assumed the imperial titles as a matter of course, associated with himself in the government his son, who bore the same name, but who is clearly distinguished in the Kharoshthi legend as "maharaja" only;[43] in the next series of coins, issued when Spalirises had forfeited the title "king of kings," he associated Spalagadama, evidently on the death of prince Spalirises,[44] who is heard of no more. In his

[40] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, pp. 352, 356.

[41] Can we pretend that the two documents dated respectively in a Christian month and a Muslim month are both according to one and the same era because A.D. and Hejira are not mentioned in connection with the years? It is open to the scholar to doubt that the era in question was Vikrama, and look for another era, but this should be done within the bounds of reason. Dr. Basham (*art. cit.*, p. 87) notes his objections to the chronology adopted by Dr. Lohuizen-De Leeuw, though from other points of view. Nor does it find support from R. B. Whitehead in his article "The Dynasty of General Aspavarman," *NC*, sixth series, vol. IV, pp. 99-104.

[42] Dr. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw adduces the fact that the nephew of Gondophernes, Abdagases, had a grown-up son in A.D. 35 (identifying him with the Abdagases mentioned by Tacitus) in support of her dates for Gondophernes, viz., 30-10 B.C.—arguing, "if Abdagases was an old man in A.D. 35 then the time when he took part in the government as Viceroy, as a rather young man, at the end of Gondophernes' reign, must be about 10 B.C." In reply to this it may be pointed out that there is no means of knowing that in A.D. 35 Gondophernes's nephew was an old man; for from the mere fact that Abdagases had a grown-up son it does not follow that Abdagases was old. In India it is usual for a person of forty-five years to have a son of twenty-five years. Nor does the fact that two persons are related to each other as uncle and nephew always make for difference as to age, and this is specially so in polygamous households where wives are taken at different ages.

[43] *CHI*, vol. I, p. 591. Rapson's list.

[44] Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 347—legend on third obverse.

turn, "Spalagadama" disappears and his place is taken by Azes,[45] who ultimately succeeded Spalirises, showing that Azes, coming as he does last, was the youngest.

Thus the evidence we have gathered from the sources, historical, numismatic, and inscriptional, goes to show beyond a shadow of doubt that Gondophernes reigned in the first half of the first century A.D. This is a fact of supreme importance for the history of Christianity in India, because at the division of the world among the disciples of Our Lord, for the purpose of the propagation of the Gospel, the kingdom of Gondophernes fell to the lot of St. Thomas. The designation of this kingdom by certain ecclesiastical writers as Parthia can now be understood as being due to the practice, not too infrequent among writers as among common people, of calling the territory by the name of the dynasty ruling over it.

[45] *Ibid.*, p 344.

CHAPTER I

APOSTOLIC TRADITION

THE MISSION of St. Thomas to the court of Gondophernes is described in the *Acts of St. Thomas*. It is an apocryphal work attributed to Bardesana, which was probably written in the beginning of the third century either at Edessa itself or some other place in upper Mesopotamia.[1] The work is divided into nine parts, of which eight are called "Acts," and the last "The Consummation of Judas Thomas."

The first Act is entitled "The (first) Act of Judas Thomas the Apostle, when He (i.e., Our Lord) sold him to the merchant Ḥabbān, that he might go down and convert India." St. Thomas, we are told, was at first reluctant to go, saying :

> I have not strength enough for this, because I am weak. And I am a Hebrew : how can I teach the Indians ?

While he was reasoning thus, Our Lord appeared to him in a vision of the night and said to him:

> Fear not, Thomas, because my grace is with thee.

But he would not be persuaded at all, saying :

> Whithersoever Thou wilt, Our Lord send me ; only to India I will not go.

Then a certain merchant, an Indian, called Ḥabbān, "happened to come into the south country," sent by Gūdnaphar to procure for him a skilful carpenter. Our Lord appeared to Ḥabbān and sold St. Thomas to him for twenty pieces of silver. Travelling by ship they put in at the town of Sanḍarūk. They disembark at this port, and attend the wedding of the king's only daughter. At the wedding they see a Hebrew girl playing the flute,

[1] Tisserant, "L'Eglise Nestorienne," *DTC*, vol. IX, col. 161.

and St. Thomas ultimately converts the bride and the bridegroom.

The second Act is headed: "The Second Act when Thomas the Apostle entered into India and built a palace for the king in Heaven." On being presented to the king, St. Thomas agreed to build the palace, beginning in the month of Teshrī (October-November) and finishing it in Nīsān (April). But he spent all the money given to him for the purpose on the poor—thus building for the king a palace in heaven by using the royal funds in almsgiving. The disappointed king casts St. Thomas and the merchant into prison. While they are lying there, Gad, the king's brother, dies and, being carried by the angels to heaven, is shown the heavenly palace which St. Thomas had built by his good works. Gad is restored to life, and in the sequel both Gūdnaphar and Gad are converted.

The next four Acts are unimportant, being concerned merely with miracles.

The seventh Act is headed: "How Judas Thomas was called by the general of king Mazdai to heal his wife and daughter." It begins with the words, "And while Judas was preaching throughout all India." General Ṣīfūr, who speaks of himself as a great man, throughout India, came to him. St. Thomas left his converts under the care of his deacon Xantippus (Xenophon) and set out with Ṣīfūr. They went with a "driver" in a "chariot" drawn by cattle. They reached the city of king Mazdai, and the Apostle healed the General's wife and daughter.

From *Flos Sanctorum*, 1503

The eighth Act "of Mygdonia and Karīsh," describes the conversion of Mygdonia, a noble lady, and Tertia, the queen of king Mazdai, which is the cause of the martyrdom of St. Thomas.

The final section of the work is headed: "The consummation of Judas Thomas." The Apostle is condemned to death by king Mazdai, and his martyrdom is described. It takes place "outside the city" on a mountain. St. Thomas is speared to death by four soldiers.[2]

Such, in brief, is the story of St. Thomas's mission to India, which, though it is embellished by legend, does seem to possess

[2] Phillips, "Connection of St. Thomas the Apostle with India," *IA*, vol. XXXII, pp. 3-5.

an inner core of truth. In the first place, it is curious that, until the discovery of his coins in the nineteenth century, this early Christian source alone should have preserved the name of Gondophernes from oblivion. Further, the circumstances under which the book came into existence make it obvious that the story of the mission itself could not have been an invention on the part of the author. For it must be remembered that the book is a Gnostic work written for the express purpose of defending certain unorthodox ethical and doctrinal principles for which the author seeks support in the Acts of the Apostles. That being the case, if the mission itself was a figment, the author would have run the risk of being laughed out of court from the outset among a generation of readers from whose minds the memory of the events connected with the life and death of the Apostle had not yet faded out. The mythical element was a stock-in-trade of religious romances, such as this book was in reality, and was permissible in this form of literature. Lastly, the *Acts* possess sufficient local colour, a fact which should not be ignored. As Sylvain Lévi has pertinently remarked on this point :

> An exact knowledge of India appears in the episodes and details of the *Acts* : on disembarking at Sndruk-Andrapolis, Thomas is obliged to take part in a feast ; he there sings a mystical hymn in his mother-tongue. In the multitude which surrounds him, only one person understands him ; she is only a flute-player, like Thomas, a native of Palestine ; the king of the country had engaged her to enliven the assembled guests with her music. The accidental meeting is not so removed from probability as to be surprising. According to Strabo (*ed.* Müller-Didot, 82, 18), young female musicians of western origin were articles of import certain to please in India ; professionally they were not distinguished from "the young well-made girls intended for debauchery," whom the Greek merchants offered together with musical instruments to the kings of the ports of Gujarat.[3]

To this we may add the further observation : where else than in India can we find the equivalent of chariots drawn by cattle, viz., the bullock-cart of the South Indian villages ?

The story of Gondophernes apart. it was possibly the existence of

[3] Lévi, "Notes on the Indo-Scythians," *IA*, vol. XXXIII, p. 12.

a Jewish colony at Takshaśila that drew St. Thomas to this place. For it must be remembered that as a rule the Apostles preached the Gospel to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles, and they must have been guided by this principle when they divided the countries among themselves for purposes of evangelization. Although no traces of such a colony have so far been found, it must be noted that during the Achaemenid regime, Aramaic had become current in Takshaśila[4] which was a city where Jewish enterprise could find an agreeable environment due to community of language. In fact, an Aramaic inscription has been found at Takshaśila which would seem to have been set up in honour of a high official named Rōmēdōtē, who owed his advancement to the patronage of the viceroy or governor, Priyadarśi.[5] Now we know of only one person who used this title, which means "of friendly mien" or "gracious," virtually as his name—Aśoka. The inscription may refer to his earlier years when, as heir-apparent of Biṅdusāra, he was ruling as viceroy of Takshaśila and the north-west. It was too early, even in Biṅdusāra's reign, to change Aramaic as the official language, a change which had to await Aśoka's rule, who substituted Magadhan Prakrit in his edicts. Even so, he based these edicts on Persian models.[6] Aramaic was responsible for the development of a local script—Kharoshthi—which was current during the whole of the first century, being employed for official and non-official purposes.[7] Ḥabbān, mentioned in the *Acts*, is a Semetic name—from which it may be inferred that he was a Jew, and it may also be argued from the fact that Ḥabbān brought St. Thomas to India, that he was a Christian—one of those Parthian Jews who embraced Christianity on Pentecost day after hearing Peter's sermon. His official position as the king's merchant must have given him numerous opportunities to travel abroad.[8]

Takshaśila owed its position to the fact that it was a meeting-place of three great trade routes—one from Eastern India to the Punjab, which was to become the royal highway of the Mauryan

[4] Tarn in *CAH*, vol. VI, pp. 402-03.
[5] Marshall, *Taxila*, vol. I, p. 165.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 165-66.
[8] Farquhar, "The Apostle Thomas in Northern India," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. X, pp. 11-14.

empire, running from Pāṭaliputra to the north-west; the second from Western Asia through Bactria, Kāpiśī, and Pushkalāvati, and so across the Indus to this city, and the third, from Kashmir and Central Asia by way of Srinagar Valley and Bāramulla to Mānsehra and so down the Hāripur Valley. It also profited by its natural advantages, being situated in a fertile plain, bursting with rich harvests, and an abundance of flower and fruit.[9]

During the Maurya period and before, Takshaśila, although a large and densely populated city, had no architecture commensurate with its wealth. Says Marshall:

> So far as can be judged from the patches of remains uncovered, the layout of the city was haphazard and irregular, its streets crooked, its houses ill-planned and built of rough rubble masonry in mud, which though neater and more compact than the masonry of the earlier settlement below it, was still relatively crude and primitive.[10]

Apollonius of Tyana, who visited Takshaśila during the reign of Gondophernes, saw no great display of buildings, and the men's quarters of the palace, the porticos, and the court, were all of a modest, subdued character. The religious establishments were perhaps a little more elaborate. The massive remains of the Jandial fire-temple at Takshaśila, which had been built in the Greek style, leaves no doubt that it originally was a magnificent and towering structure. Referring to this temple, Philostratus, in his *Life of Apollonius*, says he saw

> . . . a temple in front of the wall, about 100 feet in length and built of shell-like stone. And in it was a shrine which, considering that the temple was so large and provided with a peristyle, was disproportionately small but nevertheless worthy of admiration; for nailed to each of its walls were bronze panels on which were portrayed the deeds of Porus and Alexander; the elephants, horses, soldiers, helmets and shields are depicted in brass, silver, gold and copper, the lances, javelins and swords all in iron.[11]

[9] Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[11] "*Vit. Apoll.*," II, 20, cited in Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

Takshaśila was also celebrated as a *studium generale*, where instruction was imparted in almost all branches of human knowledge then known, from mathematics to medicine, and from astrology to archery. This pre-eminence as a university centre was due to its geographical position as the meeting-place of the trade routes, and to the peculiarly cosmopolitan character of its population. Teachers of various subjects may have had *sabhas* (or assemblies) of their own, each sabha constituting a faculty.[12]

According to Philostratus, the king ruling at the time of Apollonius's visit in A.D. 46 was Phraotes. Herzfeld has ingeniously suggested that Phraotes was a Graecized corruption of *apratihata* (invincible), a title of which Gondophernes was particularly fond.[13] His empire comprised Sistan, Sind (probably Cutch and Kathiawar), the southern and western Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Southern Afghanistan, and the part of the Parthian dominions he annexed to the west of Sistan.[14] Apollonius, we are told, conversed with the king in Greek, a circumstance not surprising in view of the fact that it was the medium for the conduct of business throughout Western Asia, apart from the fact that his empire embraced a large portion of the Seleucid dominions. Furthermore, the influx of articles from the Graeco-Roman world, which followed the Roman conquest, would show that these monarchs, in the bent of their mind, were essentially Hellenic. But the catholicity of their religious outlook is amply borne out by the fact that, as revealed by archaeological discoveries, the Greek religion flourished side by side with other religions, such as Brahmanism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, in their empire.

Is there any clue indicative of Gondophernes's own religious affiliation or beliefs? The late Mr. T. K. Joseph, who was an ardent supporter of St. Thomas's apostolate in the Punjab while decrying his mission to Malabar and the South, thought that he had discovered in one of his titles—*Deva-vrata*—which Gondophernes bore and in what is taken as one of his characteristic symbols, sufficient indication of his profession of Christianity. He wrote:

> King Gondophernes of the Punjab, St. Thomas's convert, had preferred the title *Deva-vrata* (=devoted to God—singular) to

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

the then usual titles *Deva-putra* and *Dēvānām priya* (=son of God, and dear to the Gods—plural), and also adopted what historians call his "characteristic symbol"—viz., a small "v" surmounting a large "O" standing on an inverted "T" (⊥) as its base. The three combined look like a big wine cup (=chalice) such as the chalice used by Christ at His Last Supper with His 12 disciples, and ever after that by all Christians at the Eucharist in the Punjab as the *Acts* (*ca.* A.D. 220) tell us. And the chalice, and not the Cross, is the earliest known Christian symbol. (See Ency. Brit., S. V. chalice).[15]

It is true that monarchs of the times tried to give themselves airs of divinity by introducing in their coinage features such as "the royal bust rising from the clouds," "flames issuing from the king's shoulders," and "his august head shown inside a frame." It has even been surmised that Wima Kadphises (A.D. 64-78) delighted in describing himself as "the lord of all his people (or all the worlds) not only in the temporal sense of the term but also in its spiritual sense," when he inscribed on his coins the legend:

Maharajasa rajadirajasa sarvalogaiśvara
mahiśvaraśa Vima Kathphiśasa tradura.[16]

But the epithet "deva-vrata" assumed by Gondophernes, appearing as it does on the obverse of his round billon coins, has specific reference to a deity whose figure appears in these coins on the reverse, and this figure is not Christ, but a trident-bearing Śiva. As Dr. J. N. Banerjea has rightly observed:

> This Indian deity, "who appears in his anthropomorphic form for the first time in the foreign money on a few coins of Maues, is very often described in early Indian and foreign literature as Deva, and it is possible that when Gondophernes describes himself in most of his coins issued either singly or jointly as *devavrata*, 'vowed or devoted to *deva*,' he refers indirectly to his Śiva affiliation."[17]

[15] Joseph, "Constantine and Indias," *JIH*, vol. XXVIII, p. 2.

[16] Banerjea, "The Title 'Devaputra' on the Kuyula Kara Kadphises' Coins," *JNSI*, vol. IX, pp. 79-80.

[17] Banerjea, "Scythians and Parthians in India," *Comprehensive History of India*, vol. II, p. 214.

This however does not obviate the possibility that Gondophernes may have been converted after he issued these coins, and almost at the close of his reign.

The port at which Ḥabbān and St. Thomas disembarked—Sanḍarūk-Andranopolis—cannot now be identified. Nor does it figure among the ports mentioned by the Greek writers of the period. It may nevertheless hide an Indian name in its transformed guise,[18] and like Gondophernes himself the truth of its existence may light up with advances in the study of Indian toponymy. It may have been situated, as Dr. Jarl Charpentier has suggested, near the Indus Delta, perhaps in the neighbourhood of modern Karachi."[19] If this were really the case, Andranopolis would be Gondophernes's own port, a circumstance which would easily explain why the travellers preferred the sea-route to the overland route. A Roman citizen, St. Thomas could enter the friendly Parthian province of Mesopotamia and take ship at one of the ports situated at the head of the Persian Gulf and make his way to the port in the Indus Delta.[20]

In their meteoric progress across continents, the Apostles had time enough only to see to the church's bare organization, leaving the work of actual consolidation to the local machinery. St. Thomas could therefore only make the appointment of the head of this church before he left the Punjab, and he appointed one Xantippus, who, judging from his name, was probably a Greek, or more probably an Indian whose name was Hellenized. If he bore an Indian name answering to "yellow horse," which is the etymological meaning of Xantippus, that name may have been Gaurasva or "auburn horse," which, by the way, is a name given to an ancient king in the Mahābhārata. Xantippus, however, could not have been a deacon in the historic sense of that office, but a bishop who was the head of the local machinery for the propagation of the Gospel.[21]

[18] Rev. H. Hosten's identification of Andranopolis with Cranganore is arbitrary. *KSP*, series 5, pp. 256-57, and T. K. Joseph's criticism.

[19] Charpentier, "St. Thomas the Apostle and India," *Kyrkohistorik Arskrift*, p. 41. Charpentier wonders why our travellers should have taken this route when "it would have been surely simpler if they went by caravan through Persia towards Afghanistan."

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] Heras, *The Two Apostles of India*, pp. 1-10.

But this church had no time to strike root in the land in which it had just been planted. Within a few years of its foundation, the Parthians who had welcomed it were overthrown by the Kushāṇas, and so thorough was the destruction that these latter wrought that the very name of the Parthians faded out of men's minds, and the revival of their memory had to await the discovery of their coins and inscriptions in the last century and the spade of the archaeologist in our own day. Naturally enough, the infant "church" perished with its patrons, its scattered remnants managing to preserve a few features of Christianity—some tenets and externals. A community of Fakirs in Sind, who are reputed to be followers of Thuma Bhagat, i.e., of St. Thomas,[22] may possibly be one of these remnants. Rev. R. A. Trotter, who had some contact with this community, writes about them as follows :

> To support the contention that the apostle St. Thomas came to Sind, there is a Fakir community living in Tatta, which has occasionally revealed itself. This Fakir group, to all appearances Hindu, calls its small community by an Aramaic name, something like Barthomai, the sons of Thomas, and claims that it is descended from Christians baptized by St. Thomas himself and that in their secret society they own books and relics to support their position. Unfortunately no outsider, either Indian or European, has had access to the archives of this society, and individual members are as hard as the Indian lion.[23]

King Mazdai, to whose capital the Apostle is said to have left, cannot be identified at the present scrappy state of our knowledge of this part of Indian history, and Sylvain Lévi's attempt to identify him with the Kushāṇa King Vāsudeva (d.*ca.* A.D. 176) falls short of the events of which Mazdai was contemporary only by one hundred years! We agree with the French savant in his opinion that in its Persian form the name may well hide a Vāsudeva. We have, however, to look for this Vāsudeva in South India, if the tradition that St. Thomas met his end at Mylapore near Madras on the Coromandel coast can be shown to have a degree of plausibility. This tradition, it may be pointed out, is tenaciously held

[22] Hosten, "St Thomas in India or Tattah Fakirs and Fr. B. Burthey, S.J.," *Indian Athenaeum*, September 1923, p. 1.

[23] Trotter, *Conference*, February 1947.

by the Christians of Malabar, who pride in calling themselves St. Thomas Christians.

The *Acts* in fact seem to leave a lacuna which is admirably filled in by this South Indian tradition. For, while the *Acts* make St. Thomas leave Takshaśila directly for the court of king Mazdai under whom he meets his end, we are told in the *De Transita Mariae*, which is one of the most ancient Christian writings, though admittedly apocryphal, that from his mission at Takshaśila the Apostle was summoned to be present at the bedside of the Blessed Virgin in her last moments.[24] St. Thomas does not appear to have again returned to Takshaśila. For, in his farewell sermon which he preached when he took leave of his disciples, he seems to have had a presentiment that he was leaving them forever. In this sermon he warned the congregation in the following words :

> Children and brethren that have believed in the Lord, abide in this faith, preaching Jesus who was proclaimed unto you by me, to bring you hope in Him; and forsake not Him, and He will not forsake you. While ye sleep in this slumber that weigheth down the sleepers, He sleeping not, keepeth watch over you ; and when ye sail, and are in peril and none can help He walking upon the waters supporteth and abideth. For I am now departing from you, and *it appears not if I shall again see you according to the flesh*. Be ye not therefore like unto the people of Israel, who losing sight of their pastors for an hour, stumbled.[25]

Now, according to the South Indian tradition the Apostle came to Malabar after preaching to the inhabitants of the island of Socotra and establishing there a Christian community, and he landed at the ancient port of Cranganore—Muyiri-Khodu or Muziris of Ptolemy and the Periplus[26]—in A.D. 52.[27] There are no Christians

[24] Lévi, *art. cit.*, p. 13 ; Phillips, *art. cit.*, p. 157.

[25] James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 395.

[26] Meile, "Les Yavanas dans l'Inde Tamoule," *JA*, t. 232-33, p. 86.

[27] Lévi, *art. cit.*, p. 11, note 3 ; Germann, *Die Kirche des Thomas-Christiens*, p. 43. This tradition is fully recorded in the Jesuit "Report" on the Serra (the name by which the Portuguese designated Malabar), written in Portuguese and bearing the date 1604. It is included in the additional volume 9853 of Jesuit Manuscripts in the British Museum. The writer clearly says that these Christians had no written records of ancient history, but relied

in the island of Socotra at present, but when St. Francis Xavier visited it in 1542 on his way to India, he found in the island a large number of Christians, though in a sad state of neglect, and observed that they rendered special honours to St. Thomas, claiming to be descendants of the Christians begotten to Jesus Christ by that Apostle.[28]

Muziris, the Cranganore of modern times, was the celebrated port and capital of the Chera kingdom, one of the three Tamil kingdoms of immemorial antiquity, among whom the whole of South India was then divided. The kingdom comprised the Western coastal strip embracing almost the whole of present Kerala, and stretching inland across the Palghat gap, it included the modern Coimbatore and a part of the Tiruchirapalli districts. It thus abutted on the Chola kingdom on the east and the Pāṇḍya kingdom in the south. The former included what was left of the Tiruchirapalli district and the whole of Tanjore, viz., the lower Kaveri valley, included between the two rivers bearing the name Vellar, and the latter corresponded to the modern districts of Tirunelveli, Madurai, and Ramnad to the east as well as what was left of the west coast from Cape Comorin northwards.[29]

The city itself was divided into four quarters—the delta of the Periyar, which later became the throbbing heart of the city, the centre called Tiruvanchik-kalam which boasted of the royal palace, the north called Trkanamatilakam which contained a well-known shrine of Śiva, and the east the city proper and the *faubourg* called Karura-Paṭṭanam which extended towards a hill closeby.[30] Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23-79) after stating that Muziris was "the first emporium of India," says:

entirely on traditions handed down by their elders, and to these they are most tenaciously attached. Medlycott, "Saint Thomas Christians," *CE*, vol. XIV, p. 679.

[28] Schurhammer and Wicki, *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii*, vol. I, p. 124; September 20, 1542. In grateful memory of the Apostle's landing, the Christians have been celebrating a feast every year to perpetuate that memory, as they do the *Shradha* or death anniversary of their ancestors, this custom supplying what is lacking in scripture and the early fathers about the apostolate of the saint. *St. Thomas the Apostle*, p. iv.

[29] Nilakanta Sastri, "South India," *Comprehensive History of India*, vol. II, pp. 499-500.

[30] Sesha Iyer, "Vanchi or Karuvur, the Ancient Chera Capital," *KSP*, vol. II, series 10, pp. 251-52.

> The station for ships is at a distance from the shore, and cargoes have to be landed and shipped by means of little boats. There reigned there, when I wrote this, Coelobothros.

A few years later the author of the Periplus (*ca.* A.D. 89) makes the statement that Muziris "a city at the height of prosperity," was "two miles distant from the mouth of the river on which it was situated and was the seat of government of the kingdom under the sway of Coelobothros." Ptolemy, speaking of the capital of Coelobothros, says that Karoura was his royal seat. This Karoura is evidently the Karura-Paṭṭanam, which was included in Vanchi—another name for the Chera capital. The table of Peutinger notes that there was a garrison at Muziris entirely composed of Greek soldiers. This fact seems to be borne out by a verse in the *Śilappadigaram* when :

> Kaḍimadil vāyil kāvaliR ciRanda
> vaḍalvāḷ yavaNark k-ayirādu pukkāṅgu
> Without being suspected by the Yavanas with murdering sword at the door of the fortress (at Madurai) excellent for keeping guard, he entered.[31]

An active commerce developed between South India and the West in the middle of the first century of the Christian era, as a result of the epoch-making discovery of Hippalus in A.D. 47.[32] —that driven by the monsoon winds, ships could traverse the Arabian Sea and make for whatever port they desired on the West coast of the Indian peninsula. Before A.D. 47, the ships from the West, not daring to cross this Sea directly, hugged the coasts of Arabia, Persia, and Baluchistan—thus slowly making their way to the mouth of the Indus, and then down the whole length of the Indian coast. A tedious voyage, it must have taken them two years to complete it, back and forth. Availing themselves of favourable winds, the ships could now cover a thousand nautical miles in forty days, and it was thus that a Roman in the second

[31] Meile, *art. cit.*, p. 112.

[32] Reinaud, "On the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea," *IA*, vol. III, p. 338. On the earlier occasion Thomas must have followed the old route along the coastal waters of Arabia to the mouth of the Indus.

half of the first century could accomplish in a year the voyage to India and back.[33] In a short time communications between India and the western world improved so much that, according to Seneca (3 B.C.—A.D. 65), a voyage, with a favourable wind, from the coast of Spain to India was a matter of days.[34] This is the reason why the Greek writers show an awareness of South India from the mid-first century onwards, whereas there is nothing about the South even in the works of Strabo (64 B.C.—A.D. 19). And on our side, the Greeks begin to figure in the Tamil classics—*The Four Centuries of War, The Four Centuries of Love,* and *The Ten Idylls—PuRanāNūRu, AganāNūRu* and *Pattupāṭṭu.*

The Greeks came to Muziris and the other parts of Malabar in search of pepper, a typically Kerala product which was in great demand in the west for seasoning food and preserving meat. We are told in the *AganāNūRu* that the Yavanas came in large vessels carrying gold coins and returned with pepper :

> . . . cēralar
> cuḷḷiyam pēriyaRRu veṇṇurei kalaṅga
> yavaNar tanda viNeimā naNkalam
> poNNodu vandu kaRiyoḍu peyarum
> vaḷaṅ-keḟu muciRi Yārppeḟa vaḷeii . . .

The thriving port of Musiri where large and beautiful ships of the Yavanas laden with gold came, splashing the white foam, on the waters of the Periyar which belongs to the Chera and go back laden with pepper.[35]

The drain of specie was no doubt highly inconvenient to Rome. For, besides bringing an unfavourable balance of trade, it caused great difficulties, resulting in great embarrassment to the government. The economic theoreticians of the times thundered against this trafficking in pepper. But despite their protests, the trade went on merrily, yielding vast fortunes to producers, merchants, and middlemen.

Following this much-travelled route, the Apostle could, leaving Myos Hormos by ship, land at Socotra, which lay on his way. Socotra

[33] Meile, *art. cit.*, p. 86.
[34] Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et Liturgie*, col. 528.
[35] Meile, *art. cit.*, p. 90.

had a heterogeneous population, among whom there must have been a Jewish element. For, speaking about the inhabitants of this island, the author of the *Periplus*, who was almost a contemporary of the Apostle, observes :

> It (the island) consists of an intermixture of foreigners, Arabs, Indians, and even Greeks, who resort hither for purposes of commerce.[36]

St. Thomas must also have come to Muziris drawn by the existence of the well-established colony, for though the documents now in the possession of the Jews do not go back to a remote antiquity, there is no reason why they should not be considered as having migrated to India along with the Yavanas, if not earlier.

According to the Dutch governor Adrian Moens, who gave some thought to this question :

> It is possible that the first Jews came here with the fleet of Solomon, a statement which is accepted by M. Basnage (Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 1705), or on the occasion of the leading into captivity of the ten tribes to Assyria by Salmanasser, or on that of the Babylonian captivity of the two tribes under Nabuchadnezar, as Mr. Hamilton will have it. There are, however, not the smallest proofs to give these guesses any verisimilitude. On the contrary, according to the general traditions of the Malabar Jews, about 1,000 people arrived in these regions a few years after the destruction of the Second Temple at Jerusalem. Thus if this account is accepted it must have happened 70 years after the birth of Christ, when Jerusalem suffered greatly at the hands of Titus Vespasian, or in the year 136, when the said town was completely demolished by the order of the Emperor Aelius Hadrian, after a rising of the Jews against the Roman government, and a new town called Aelia Capitolina was built on the same site, within two hours' distance of which town the Jews were forbidden on pain of death to approach.[37]

[36] McCrindle, "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea," *IA*, vol. VIII, *c.* 30, p. 134.

[37] Galetti and others, *The Dutch in Malabar*, p. 192. (Memorandum on the administration of the coast of Malabar by Adrian Moens.)

Mr. T. K. Joseph, however, maintained, commenting on this passage, that since the traditional date of the arrival of the Jews in Cochin was A.M. 3830, it falls in A.D. 67, considering that the starting-point of the Jewish chronology is October 7, 3761 B.C.[38] And yet if the religious observances of this ancient and venerable community, as the present writer has been assured,[39] are the same as those of their highly-esteemed co-religionists in Bombay and the Konkan—the illustrious Bene-Israel—the date of the advent of both these communities has to be pushed further back. These observances bear a striking resemblance to those in vogue in Palestine during the time of the Second Temple. Mr. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar clinches this point when he writes:

> If the ancestors of the Bene-Israel had come to India from Yemen or from any other place at the suggested 1,200 years or thereabouts ago, they would have previously given up the practice of making sacrificial meat offerings, as has been done by the Jews of other countries, who have ceased to offer such ever since the destruction of the Second Temple. Those Jews who having previously migrated into other lands received in the new lands of their adoption the reports of its destruction, alike stopped this practice. Moreover, the Jews who had been led into captivity at the time of the destruction of the First Temple and did not return at the close of the 70 years, had already foresaken the custom. But the fact that the practice has been in vogue amongst the Bene-Israel in India from time immemorial, goes to prove the ancestors of the Bene-Israel were actually in Palestine during the time of the existence of the Second Temple, and that they might have left it sometime or other before its destruction, or in other words about 2,000 years ago.[40]

To return to the South Indian tradition, St. Thomas founded the seven churches at Cranganore, Palur, North Parur, South Pallipuram, Niranam, Nellakul and Quilon. This number cannot be dismissed as symbolical, as some of these churches "have accounts of their foundation that are far from being mere ima-

[38] Joseph, "A Hebrew Inscription from Parur," *KSP*, series 3, p. 167.

[39] By Principal Moses Ezekiel, a leading member of Bene-Israel.

[40] Kchimkar, *The History of the Bene-Israel of India*, pp. 23-24. The Preface is dated 1897.

ginary fictions."[41] Thus Mr. T. K. Joseph reports that in Niranam, a hamlet to the south of Tiruvalla, there is a local tradition that most of the Namburi Brahmans having been made Christians by St. Thomas the rest left the place "after giving the boxes containing the documents relating to their landed properties to a Kaymal or Nair chief there, who has since been known as Niranam Petti Kymal (sic) i.e., the box chief of Niranam, who now lives three furlongs to the north of the Jacobite church."[42] Lieut. Conner found an inscription at Niranam which stated that the church was enlarged in A.D. 1259.[43] A similar story comes from Palayur that St. Thomas having converted some Brahman families of the place, those who refused left the village, having cursed it, and since then it has come to be called Chowghat, the cursed forest, where a Brahman can take neither food nor drink. The comments of Fr. E. R. Hambye are noteworthy:

> The tradition seems to be supported by two facts. First, recent excavations show that the present church and its compound stand on the remnants of a Hindu temple, with its tank, sacred well, sculptures. In the second place, a Brahmin family which has emigrated, called Kalathu Mana, keeps a document, Nagargarandhavaryola, where it is written: "Kali year 3153 (A.D. 52) the foreigner Thomas Sanyasi came to our village (grāman), preached there causing pollution. We therefore came away from that village." How old is that document in its present version? Palayur must have been also a Jewish centre, for one of the nearby places is still called "Juda Kunnu," the hill of the Jews. All this convergence of various testimonies shows at least that Palayur is a place of remote Christian antiquity. Archaeological excavations will reveal a great deal of fresh evidence, as in some other places like Cranganore and Nilakkal. Already Fr. Hosten had asked for further excavations, but nobody has yet moved.[44]

[41] Hambye, "Saint Thomas and India," *The Clergy Monthly*, vol. XVI, p. 26.

[42] Joseph, *KSP*, series 2, p. 65, note 9. It is also believed that among the Nambudiri families converted by St. Thomas are those of Tayyil, Pattamukkil, Manki, and Madathilen.

[43] *Memoir of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States*, July 1816 to the end of 1820, vol. I (1863), p. 12, cited by T. K. Joseph, *KSP*, series 2, p. 65, note 8.

[44] Hambye, "Saint Thomas and India," *The Clergy Monthly*, vol. XVI, pp. 370-71.

From Malabar on the west coast the Saint proceeded to Mylapore on the eastern or Coromandel coast, where he converted king Sagan. He at length met his end at the hands of a Brahman, who put him to death with a thrust from a lance on a neighbouring hillock.[45]

In the immortal strains of Camoëns (1524-80) while the poet tries to recapture the mood of the Saint's adversaries he gives expression to the gloom that descended on the country-side as a result of this cold-blooded murder :

One day, when preaching to the fold he stood
They feigned a quarrel 'mid the mob to rise :
Already Christ His Holy man endow'd
With saintly martyrdom that opes the skies.
Rainèd innumerable stones the crowd
Upon the victim, sacred sacrifice
And last a villain, hastier than the rest,
Pierced with a cruel spear his godly breast.[46]
Wept Ganges and Indus, true Thomé ! thy fate,
Wept thee whatever lands thy foot had trod ;
Yet weep thee more the souls in blissful state
Thou ledst to don the robes of Holy Rood.

[45] Lévi, *op. cit.* later writers (vide Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-47) assert that St. Thomas died at Calamina in India—which is variously spelt as Kalamēnē (by Pseudo-Hippolytus), Kalamitē (by Pseudo-Dorotheus), Calamina (by Pseudo-Jerome, Pseudo-Sophronius) and Kalaminī (by an anonymous writer whose works are published with those of Oecomenius). And much ingenuity is spent in the effort to identify the place. But it would appear that Calamina or its Tamil original Calurmina was the original name of the hillock—*Calur*, meaning stone, and *mina*, on. The hillock has been called now for centuries after St. Thomas, and its original name, which must have been in use during the whole of the period when Christian influence at Mylapore was feeble, is forgotten. In point of fact, according to the testimony of Fr. Peter Paul Godinho, Rector of the Jesuit College at Cochin [recorded by A. Kircher, *China Illustrata* (1667), p. 58] as late as the seventeenth century, the Malabar Christians, when asked where St. Thomas died, would reply : "at Maliapur Calurmina," i.e., "on the stone at Mylapore." Hosten, *Antiquities from San Thomé and Mylapore*, p. 307.

[46] Here the martyr is first stoned and then pierced with a lance. Perhaps this story was related to the poet in this form. In the Malabar legends about St. Thomas there is one in which the Brahmans near Cranganore are represented as stoning the Saint and leaving him dead. Zaleski, *The Apostle St. Thomas*, p. 131.

But Angels waiting at the Paradise-gate
Meet thee with smiling face, hymning God.
We pray thee, pray that still vouchsafe thy Lord
Unto thy Lusians His good aid afford.[47]

When did the martyrdom take place? To look for its date in the ecclesiastical documents is like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay. It is not even known why December 21 was observed as the day of his martyrdom in the Western Church. In Rome, for the first three or four centuries after the peace of the Church only two kinds of feasts were kept, the anniversaries of the local martyrs and the dedications of churches. The commemoration of Saints who had no church in Rome was quite unknown. Consequently, in the oldest Roman martyrology there is no feast of St. Thomas, as also in the Gallican liturgy, which really derives from the Roman. Nor is there a feast for St. Thomas in the so-called Leonine Sacramentary of about A.D. 600. But in the Gallican which is purely Roman of the early seventh century there appears St. Thomas, XII Kal. Jan. Natale, i.e., martyrdom.[48]

In like manner it is not possible to explain the other dates assigned for the feast of St. Thomas, such as October 6 by the Greek Church, and July 3 by the Edessan Church.[49]

Some time in the second century the sacred relics or a part thereof were transferred to Edessa by a Syrian merchant—a crowning proof of the martyrdom of the Saint at Mylapore. For, no other place in India claims the honour of possessing his tomb.[50] St. Ephraim had surely the translation of the relics in mind when he wrote in one of his hymns :

Whence is thy origin O Thomas that so illustrious
thou shouldst become. A merchant has conveyed

[47] Burton's *Lusiads*, Canto X, 109-118.

[48] Zimmermann, "On the Feast of St. Thomas," *KSP*, series 6, p. 296.

[49] Burkitt, "St. Thomas and his Feasts," *KSP*, series 6, pp. 287-302.

[50] In trying to meet this argument Mr. T. K. Joseph says in his article in *Kerala Studies*, p. 45, that "In about 1924 an old parishioner of the Jacobite Syrian Church at Tiruvancodu in South Travancore (the half-church among the 7½ St. Thomas churches) said that there was a tradition that the unusually broad tomb in the southern yard of the Church was that of St. Thomas and a priest of his." This is nothing more than catching at a straw.

thy bones, a (Priest) Pontiff has made a celebration
for thee ; and a king has erected a shrine (for thee).[51]

It stands to reason to suppose that the entire remains were not translated to Edessa, as some have tried to deduce from the loosely worded statement of Gregory of Tours in his *De Gloria Beatorum Martyrum*.[52]

On the other extreme is the story collected by Fr. Nunes Barretto *in situ* that the mission from Edessa was actually deceived into taking counterfeit remains—those of a disciple of the Saint also called Thomas—by the people of the country who were reluctant to part with so precious a possession, "because of the devotion and veneration in which they hold the Apostle."[53]

In his *Carmena Nisbina XLII* St. Ephraim gives us the precise information that it was only a part of the head of the Apostle that was brought to Edessa. In this hymn he describes the devil as howling because the relic has come to the City :

The devil howled : into what land shall I fly from the just ?
I stirred up death to slay the Apostles that by their death I
may escape their blows. But now I am struck still harder ;
the Apostle whom I slew in India has overtaken me in Edessa.
Here and there he remains all himself ; thither I went and there
was he ; here and there I found him and I grieved.[54]

ST. BARTHOLOMEW

When St. Thomas was active in the Punjab, St. Bartholomew, who had received *India citerior*[55] as the field of his mission, was

[51] Placid, "Thomas in Syriac Writings and Liturgies," *St. Thomas the Apostle*, p. 74.

[52] Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, t. LXXI 733: "Thomas apostolus secondum historiam passionis ejus in India Passusesse declaratur ; cujus beatum corpus post multum tempus assumptum in civilatate quam Syri Aedissam vocant translatum est."

[53] Wicki, *DI*, vol. VII, p. 200. Letter dated January 20, 1567.

[54] Schuster, "A note on St. Thomas and his feasts," *KSP*, series 6, p. 297.

[55] "India citerior," according to Rufinus following the mistaken geographical notions of the times, closely adjoins Ethiopia. The idea then prevailing was that what we term the Arabian Sea was a lake and India extended towards the west and joined Africa. As far back as the latter half of the first

preaching the Gospel in Western India. It is the tradition constantly handed down by the Byzantine writers that St. Bartholomew went over to *India Felix*. Now, *Felix* is a literal translation of the Sanskrit word *Kalyan*, meaning happy. By a process of association, easily understandable, the name originally applied to the country was transferred to the people so that in the seventh century we have writers like Pseudo-Sophronius telling us that St. Bartholomew preached the Gospel to Indians who are called "the happy."[56] It seems that the country itself had received its name of *India Felix* from the city of Kalyan, now a suburb of Bombay, which was then a flourishing centre of foreign trade,[57] and had succeeded the old port of Sopara as the emporium of Western India.

In fact, Bombay has been the commercial capital of India since remote times, there being merely a shift in the locale of the harbour in the course of the ages, the region remaining the same. The pre-eminence of Bombay has been due to its being the only gateway of the Deccan, the rich hinterland behind the Ghats. Kalyan had moreover a Jewish colony, dating from ancient times, the Bene-Israel.[58] It is to Kalyan, therefore, that the Apostle betook himself. He must have first preached in the Jewish synagogue and then to the local people. But we shall be doing violence to

century A.D., this idea had been held out to scorn by the author of the *Periplus*; but it somehow persisted long afterwards, and we thus find it in Rufinus (A.D. 345-410). "India citerior" would thus be Western India and the Deccan. "Between this India Citerior and Parthia," says Rufinus, "there extends an interior tract very long to cross, India Ulterior." This would be the whole of Northern India from the Punjab to Bengal, where the preaching of the Apostles had not reached. It was in fact between "India citerior" and Parthia, in the broader sense, i.e., extending as far as and including the Punjab. "Ulterior India" was so named because it was distant from the mariner's point of view, viewing the land from his ship. *HE,PL*, t. XXI, *c.* 478.

[56] "Bartholomeus apostolus, Indis us suidicuntur fortunati praedicavi-Evangelium Christi, et Evangelium quod est secundum Matthaeum eis tradit dit. . . ." *Appendix de Viris Apostolorum* of Sophronius to *Liber de Viris Illustribus* of Jerome, *PL*, XXIII *c.* 762.

[57] "Periplus of the Erythraean sea," sec. 52, *IA*, VIII, p. 144.

[58] "They have long been considered as the descendants of a portion of the Israelites who were removed from their homes and carried captive to Halah, Habor, Hara, Nahar-Gazan, and other places in the neighbourhood of Mesopotamia by the Assyrian kings Pul, Tiglath-Pelneser, and Shalmaneezer" (See I Chron. V. 26; 2 Kings, XVI. 6); Wilson, "The Bene-Israel of

the established chronology if, following Fr. Perumalil[59] and the late Fr. Heras, we are to identify king Polymius and Astregas, one the principal disciple of Bartholomew, the other his brother who had the Saint executed, with Pulumavi and Aristakāman, the Śātavāhana kings. For, both these kings ruled before the commencement of the Christian era, and the period A.D. 35-90 is that of the Kshatrapa inter-regnum.[60]

In the second century the church at Kalyan sent messengers to Bishop Demetrius of Alexandria requesting him to send a scholar to help them in their disputation with the Brahmans. Pantenus, who was a Stoic philosopher, was selected for the mission. He preached to the Brahmans and philosophers of India; but we do not know with what result. He found at Kalyan a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew in the handwriting of the evangelist himself, which had been left there by St. Bartholomew. When he returned, Pantenus took this precious copy with him to Alexandria.[61]

The history of the Christians of St. Bartholomew is thereafter intermingled with that of the Christians of St. Thomas, when the Persian Church established its control over the Indian Christians. It is also under the influence of the Persian Church that the tradition of St. Bartholomew's apostolate in Kalyan, was lost. They could not believe that St. Bartholomew was at all associated with Kalyan in view of the established tradition among this clergy that all his connections were with Armenia—accustomed as they were to think of the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew near Nakhichevan in Armenia.[62]

Bombay," *IA*, IV, pp. 322-23; this author, however, maintains that they are of more recent origin, coming "from Arabia Felix, with the Jews or Israelites of which province . . . they have from time immemorial had much intercourse, and whom they much resemble in their bodily structure and appearance."

[59] Perumalil, *The Apostles in India*, pt. II, chap. 4.

[60] Gopalachari, "The Śātavāhana Empire," *Comprehensive History of India*, vol. II, chap. 9, pp. 308-12.

[61] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, liv. V, cap. X, p. 75; Jerome, *op. cit.*, *PL*, XXIII, chap. 36, *c.* 681-82; Jerome, Epist. 79 Ad Magnum Oratorem, Pantaenus, *PL*, chap. 22, *c.* 667.

[62] Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, p. 213.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH IN INDIA COMES OF AGE

WHY DID EDESSA of all places ask for the relics ?[1] This question has been asked by the late Mr. T. K. Joseph, who for fifty years devoted the best part of his life to the investigation of the history of the St. Thomas Christians. "What is the importance of Edessa ? Why not Alexandria ? Pantaenus goes to India (Kalyan) at the end of the second century A.D. The difference is only thirty years. What has happened in the meanwhile ?"

If Edessa asked for the relics, and kept them as its treasured possession, it is because there was very close connection between it and St. Thomas. The story goes that having heard from his ambassadors, who eyewitnessed in Jerusalem the miracles of Our Lord, the toparch Abgar, who had founded the city of Edessa, in that part of Iraq called Osroene, begged of Him by letter that He should come to Edessa to cure him of the acute rheumatic pains with which he had been afflicted. Our Lord's reply was that He would send him one of His disciples but only after He had been taken up to His Father. He assured him that the disciple would heal him of his infirmity, and give salvation to him and to those with him. Accordingly, after the Ascension, it devolved on St. Thomas to send the promised disciple, and he sent Addai or Thaddaeus, one of the seventy-two, to Edessa for the purpose.[2]

Addai cured and converted Abgar, and the royal example being emulated by the people, the number of converts daily mounted at Edessa. Addai then preached the Gospel at Arbela, the capital of Adiabene, Nisibis, Bethgarma, and Mosul, and came to India to continue St. Thomas's work.[3] In the meanwhile he had sent two of his own disciples, Aggai and Mari, to other places of Western Asia. Aggai evangelized Armenia, Adhorbijan, Assyria, Media,

[1] Joseph, *Kerala Studies*, p. 44.

[2] Rehatsek, "Christianity in the Persian Dominions from the Beginning to the Fall of the Sassanian Dynasty," *JBBRAS*, vol. XII, pp. 20-23.

[3] Wallis Budge, *The Monks of Kublâi Khân Emperor of China*, p. 15.

and the country at the head of the Persian Gulf and in the neighbourhood of Al-Baṣrah, while Mari preached in Assyria and Senar, and betaking himself to Seleucia, he established his See at Ctesiphon.

On the death of Abgar, however, there was a hostile reaction against the Christian religion. His son savagely persecuted its adherents, as also did his nephew, Sanadrug. Under the latter, St. Bartholomew and St. Addai, who had both left India for Western Asia, suffered martyrdom at Arepon.[4] When Aggai returned to Edessa, Sanadrug ordered him to give up his ministry and return to his old profession as a weaver. On his refusal to do so, Sanadrug had the saint put to death by having his legs severed.

Edessa thus owed the Faith indirectly to St. Thomas, to whom, therefore, it was grateful. The saint had also endeared himself to the Edessans by the letters he wrote from India. They had these letters among their priceless treasures, and now wished to express their sense of gratitude in a more permanent form—by raising a noble monument in which they probably wished to treasure his relic.

They could raise this monument, however, only in the fourth century, enshrining the relic for the moment in an old church.[5] This common origin of the churches in Edessa and Ctesiphon, would also account for the fact that the Indian Church was affiliated to Persia when, according to the tradition current among our St. Thomas Christians, their own line of bishops coming down from the days of the Apostle having become extinct, they applied to the Catholicos of Persia to send them a bishop.[6] There was, of course, also the added reason that while the other churches had almost become moribund, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, after its separation from Antioch by mutual consent, developed an amazing vitality which enabled it not only to keep pace with the energetic Sassanian dynasty, rapidly bringing country after country under

[4] Rehatsek, *art. cit.*, p. 22. *Chronican Edessum*, Assemani, *Bibliothèca Orientalis*, vol. V, p. 42. Rehatsek, *loc. cit.* Friar William of Rubruck says that on the mountains not far from Nachichevan in Armenia there was a church in which St. Bartholomew and St. Jude Thaddeus were martyred. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, p. 213.

[5] St. Ephmer *Carmina Nisibina*, 42p, 79p, 163; *Homiliae Selectae*, III, pp. 755-62, cited in Hambye, *The Clergy Monthly*, vol. XVI, p. 372, n. 30.

[6] Souza, *Oriente Conquistado*, 2, 1, 2, 11, pp. 65-66. Couto says that the Malabar Church was governed from its inception by Catholic prelates sent from Edessa. Decada XII, liv. III, cap. V, p. 287.

its rule, but to outstrip the boundaries of the Persian empire in a bid to achieve the spiritual conquest of Turkestan and China.

The tomb of St. Thomas had in the meanwhile become a centre of pilgrimage for Christians and non-Christians alike. Thus in the second decade of the sixteenth century, Duarte Barbosa, who saw the tomb, crowded by pilgrims "from many lands," wrote :

> He (the Saint) lies very modestly in the church which his disciples and fellows built for him. The Muslims and Hindus used to burn lights on it, each one claiming it as his own. The church is arranged in our fashion with crosses on the altar and on the summit of the vault, and a wooden grating, and peacocks as devices, but it is now very ruinous, and all around it covered with brushwood, and a poor Muslim holds charge of it and begs alms for it, for which a lamp is kept burning at night, and on what is left they live. Some Indian Christians go there on pilgrimage and carry away many relics, little earthern balls from the same tomb of the Blessed St. Thomas.[7]

In fact, the shrine was so greatly venerated that according to what was related to Gaspar Correa, the Portuguese historian, by the custodian, it was held in the highest esteem. For on their festival days the Hindus would bring their images accompanied by large crowds and great rejoicing, and would, as they approached the door of the church, lower them three times to the ground as a mark of reverence to it, a practice which had been followed from time immemorial. [8]

In the time of St. Thomas and his royal convert, Sagan, Mylapore was called Calamina, a name which it retained through the centuries. Sir John Mandeville, who must have passed through the town some time in the thirties or forties of the fourteenth century, says :

> In that land of Mabaron (i.e., ma'bar, a name given by the Arabs to the Coromandel coast) lies St. Thomas the Apostle and his body all whole, in a fair tomb in the city of Calamy ; for there was he martyred and graven.[9]

[7] Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. II, p. 129.
[8] Correa, *Lendas da India*, vol. II, p. 724.
[9] *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 526 ; Letts, *Mandeville's Travels*, vol. I, pp. 123-24.

The local people called it Mylapore or Pavam, Mylapore meaning "the city of the peacock," from *Mayura*—changed into *Maila*, by the Tamilians for reasons of metathesis, while *pavam*, in their own parlance, meant peacock. For, as Fr. Lucena says:

> Just as this bird is the most beautiful among birds, this city was the most celebrated among the cities of the East for its prosperity as for its comeliness.[10]

But it had lost its former state when Marco Polo passed through it about 1290. It was at that time a struggling township with no great population and scarcely frequented by traders as there was no merchandise to be got there.[11] The city must have been submerged, as is the case with the ancient city of Dwarka in Gujarat. Fr. Nunes Barretto, who collected the folklore at Mylapore in 1566 says that according to this folklore:

> There was here a very old and great city, all of which is now covered by the sea. And even now the various places in the sea to which the fishermen go to fish, are known by them one as the palace of the king, and another as the pass of the king, and others still by the names which they bore in olden times. From this it would appear that it was the city of Calamina in which the holy Apostle was crowned with the glory of martyrdom.[12]

At this time the Christians, it would appear, lest they should offend the Hindus, had given another version to the death of the Apostle, a version which made it appear that it was the result of an accident rather than that of a deeply laid Brahmanic conspiracy. A *govi*, or an untouchable, having shot an arrow at a peacock, it by chance struck the Saint in the right side and killed him instantly. These scapegoats were so profoundly impressed by the guilt of their ancestors, that on no account could they be induced to enter Mylapore. As Marco Polo says:

> Nothing on earth would induce them to enter the place—where

[10] Lucena, *Historia da Vida da Padre Francisco de Xavier*, vol. I, p. 163.
[11] Yule, *The Book of Marco Polo*, vol. II, p. 353.
[12] *DI*, vol. VII, pp. 199-200.

> Messer St. Thomas is—I mean where his body lies, which is in a certain city of the province of Ma'bar. Indeed, were twenty or thirty men to lay hold of one of these *govis* and try to hold him in the place where the body of the blessed Apostle of Jesus Christ lies, they could not do it! Such is the influence of the Saint; for it was by people of this generation that he was slain.[13]

The practice of taking a handful of mud from the grave is referred to by Marco Polo, who says that it was used as a potion against illness.[14]

But already by the eighth or the ninth century, Mylapore seems to have been well-known throughout the Christian world. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, in the year 883:

> Sigheln and Aethalstan conveyed to Rome the alms which the king Alfred had vowed to send thither, and also to India to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew.[15]

The impression that St. Bartholomew also met with his death in India was due to the mistaken notion of the Venerable Bede. He wrote in his *Martyrology*:

> The Natal Day of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, who, preaching the Gospel of Christ in India, was flayed alive and being beheaded by order of King Astragis completed Martyrdom.[16]

It, however, did not take them long to discover that India boasted of only one tomb—that of St. Thomas. For, though the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells us nothing about the upshot of the pilgrimage, we may infer from the twelfth century chroniclers that the pilgrims could visit only St. Thomas's tomb. Thus Florence of Worcester (*d.* A.D. 1117) speaks of Bishop Swithelm (Sigheln):

> . . . . who carried King Alfred's alms to St. Thomas in India, and returned in safety.

[13] Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 354.
[15] Thorp, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, vol. II, p. 66.
[16] *Martyrologium*, IX Kal. Sept.; Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 94; 1015 cited in Perumalil, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

And William of Malmesbury (between A.D. 1114 and 1123), referring to the same bishop, says :

> Beyond the sea, to Rome and to St. Thomas in India he (Alfred) sent many gifts. The legate employed for this purpose was Sigelinus, the Bishop of Sherborne, who, with great success arrived in India, and which everyone at this age (i.e., almost two centuries before Marco Polo and John of Monte Corvino and other travellers), wonders. Returning thence he brought back exotic gems and aromatic liqours which the land there produces.[17]

In the light of all this it is no longer necessary to equate India, occurring in a passage of Gregory of Tours, with South Arabia, as Mingana has tried to do.[18] In this passage Gregory of Tours reports, about 590, that Theodore, a pilgrim who had gone to Gaul, told him that in that part of India where the corpus (bones) of St. Thomas the Apostle had first rested (i.e., at Mylapore on the east or Coromandel coast of India), there was a monastery and a church of striking dimensions and elaborately adorned. The pilgrim had further added that "after a long interval of time these remains had been removed to Edessa."[19] According to a

[17] Joseph, "King Alfred and St. Thomas," *KSP*, vol. II, series 10, p. 257.

The late Mr. T. K. Joseph wonders why at all it was necessary for king Alfred to send an embassy to India for the purpose of fulfilling his vow ; "To offer King Alfred's alms to St. Thomas it was not necessary to take it all the way to Mylapore. Offering it at some St. Thomas's shrine nearer home (at Brescia, Nola, or Milan, or in Abyssinia, or Arabia for instance) would have, in my opinion, satisfied all parties—the King, the Pope, the legates, and the Saint. None of these would legitimately insist that the offering must without fail be made not in the West, but in the East, at the *original* tomb of St. Thomas or a St. Thomas relic shrine in India or in Indian soil." Mr. Joseph was, of course, at perfect liberty to hold his *opinion*. But that, unhappily for him, was not the opinion of the parties concerned i.e., the king and his agents. The Pope was not a party to it. And the saint would not insist on his pound of flesh. But if Alfred wished that the embassy should proceed to India, it was because of the special sanctity attaching to the place of martyrdom.

[18] Mingana, "The Early Spread of Christianity in India," *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. X, pp. 3-80.

[19] Medlycott, *op. cit.*, *CE*, vol. XIV, p. 679. Cf. chap. I for the Latin original.

Syrian calendar of an early date, the relics had been carried there by a merchant called Khabin.[20]

The Portuguese must have heard of the tomb of St. Thomas soon after their arrival in India, but it was only in 1507 that D. Francisco de Almeida, the viceroy, sent a delegation of four men to make inquires on the spot. Two of these men having died on the way, the survivors submitted their report which was transmitted to the king of Portugal. Ten years later, two Portuguese named Diogo Fernandes and Bastião Fernandes, hearing of the shrine of St. Thomas proceeded to Mylapore. They found there a church with a nave and aisles and having pillars and a roof of timber. It was twelve cubits in length, with a sacristy five cubits long which had a dome surmounted by a dwarf spire rising to a height of thirty cubits. Crosses and peacocks in plaster constituted the decoration. This structure was believed to be the tomb of the Saint. A small chapel further away was said to contain the grave of a local king, one of his converts. The two Portuguese left for Malacca, but arriving again in 1521 they reported their observations to the governor, Diogo Lopez de Sequeira, who left further inquiries into the matter to his successor, D. Duarte de Menezes.

In the meanwhile, Gaspar Correa himself, accompanied by Pero Lopes de Sampaiyo and a party of fifteen, started from Pulicat to visit the shrine. This happened on Corpus Christi day 1521. Excavating the place, they discovered the remains of "Tane Mudalier." In the following year (1522), Duarte de Menezes sent Manuel de Frias, agent on the Coromandel coast, together with Fr. Penteado, to Mylapore. Penteado wished to put up a structure at the place but having failed to induce de Frias to release the necessary funds, he went to Goa and thence to Portugal to place the case before the king. In the meantime, the governor sent de Sampaiyo with Vicente Fernandes, a mason and Fr. Gil to carry out the necessary repairs. They were assisted by an aged priest, Pero Fernandes, and two laymen, Diogo Lourenço and Diogo Fernandes, the last being one of the two who had visited the spot in 1517.

In 1523, the king of Portugal sent orders that a strict inquiry be made regarding the shrine. Accordingly, in 1524, Manuel de Frias proceeded to the place where he found Fr. Gil, Pero Fer-

[20] *Ibid.*

nandes and a third priest, together with Vicente Fernandes, Diogo Fernandes, and others. Repairs were carried out and in the course of the excavation of the tomb of the Saint they came upon the grave. They also found a broken lance, believed to be the instrument of the Saint's death. In the same year, Penteado returned from Portugal, became Vicar, and took charge of the relics.[21]

At least on two occasions grants seem to have been made to the church. In 1523, when the Portuguese carried out excavations in the church, they came upon a stone inscription in the language of the country. The inscription purported to be by "Tane Mudalier," who made a bequeathal of one per cent of the customs levied on all the goods carried by sea or land. The inscription commanded future kings, under heavy penalties of incurring grave punishments, to carry out the provisions which the donor intended to last as long as the sun and the moon endure.[22] According to the late Mr. T. K. Joseph, the St. Thomas Christians of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts were called the *Tanevi* in ancient times, and consequently, Tanevi Mudalier would mean "head of the Christians," Mudalier (or Mudalali) meaning the first man. And since these designations are not applied to kings but to mercantile castes, it would seem that the grant may have been made to the headman, who applied it to the church.[23] It may have been a tithe called *patavaram*, enjoyed by the headman of the Christians as Master of the steelyard. In fact, Marignolli speaks of St. Thomas Christians on the Coromandel coast, at Mylapore, as being Masters of the steelyard.

The second occasion when the grant was made is recorded in a copper-plate which was brought to Fr. Penteado in 1552, he being then the Vicar of the church, by an old Brahman. The Brahman said that he could bring to his notice some inscriptions registering the grants of lands in favour of the church, which the kings of old, a little after the time of St. Thomas, had made. He said he would do this only if handsomely rewarded. These grants

[21] Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, vol. I, pp. 287-89, based on Correa's *Lendas da India*. Also see the Deposition of Diogo Fernandes, one of the witnesses when the excavations were carried out; *KSP*, vol. II, series 9, pp. 205-09.

[22] Iturriotz, "St. Thomas's Tomb and Relics at Mylapore," *KSP*, vol. II, series 9, p. 207—information given by Diogo Fernandes on June 10, 1543; Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 726.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

had remained concealed and forgotten. Fr. Penteado agreed to pay the Brahman three hundred xeraphims, which he raised from among the Christian settlers. This done, the Brahman brought the plates. They were three metal plates, one span in length and half a span in breadth. On obverse each plate bore the inscription, with a Cross and a peacock on the reverse. At the top of each plate was a hole by means of which they could be hung.[24] Fr. Penteado having made enquiries, he was told of another Brahman, from the Kanara country,[25] who could read them. This Brahman, as soon as he saw them, deciphered the inscription thus :

> In the name of God who made the heaven and the earth, who has neither beginning nor end, to whom I recommend myself, under whose hand are the sun and the stars ; and who has the power to destroy all evil. This Lord created a jewel who is the king our Lord. And to him he gave power to do what he wished. This king illumined his works like the stars. At the time when the precious stones were created, he was born (a sign of destruction to all his enemies) and as a sign of favour and love for the good, for whom he has much sympathy. The grandfather of this king was called Atelaraja and his father was Campellaraja, and himself Bocaraja. He has two sons, one is called Marappa, the other Matappa. And this king is as strong as an animal, which is called *chigsao* who is the king of all and greater than all others ; and like the five kings who defeated ninety-nine kings, he has as much strength as one of those eight elephants on which the world rests. He rules over his own kingdom, and has besides three others which he annexed by force, namely, Otia (Orissa), Tulcão (Telingana), and Canara. He is the king, lord of lords, who conquered his enemies and sliced them with his sword.

The second plate contained the following :

> When 1259 years of the era had passed, in the first year which

[24] According to João de Lucena, this Brahman was from Conjeevaram, and therefore from the Carnatic i.e., the Coromaṇdel coast, and not from Karnatak, which would be the Kanarese speaking area—corresponding to the modern state of Mysore.

[25] Couto, *op. cit.*, Decada VII, liv. X, cap. 5, pp. 482-83.

is called Icarrana Rachan, on the twelfth day of the New Moon of that good year, he gave as alms to the saint of Abidara Modeliar for his church the lands listed below, starting from Chandegari with Paliarkota, Cotur, and Meliapor where the land having suffered from hailstorms (onde choveo terra) was depopulated; and this township of Meliapor is separated from Palepate and from Cotur on the eastern side, and besides a river on the south, on another side it is separated by the sea, and on the north from Frivanor. Among these places there is one, which is called Urur, another Cateparede, and another Catetangul, and another Perogum Rey, which is the head of them all. And these he gave Abedara Modeliar, to help to light his church, and all these he gave with their houses, sown land, gardens, rivers, pleasure pools, treasures, rubies, and all other precious stones which are above and below the ground and all the ships and things that come from the sea, from without breaking their bounds, and all the timber, and the imposts levied on any ship that is loaded there except for any land that may have been given to some temple. And these he gave to him, swearing before a temple called Ampisiviri Passa de Verede: he gave all these as long as the sun and the moon endure, so that his church may have them and possess them forever. And at the end of all this he said: in the name of God, and then the sign of the king.

The third plate read thus:

> This is the token of the grant in order to gain heaven; and all the kings, who will observe it, will gain much more, and he who violates it shall be seventy thousand years in hell with the worms. Because this grant which I make is forever, and for all the kings to observe—to whom I very much pray.[26]

This grant seems to be genuine because it follows the regular style of the inscriptions of the period and is correct in its details. An Indian bishop, who visited Rome in 1122, asserted that the king of the place where St. Thomas was buried had made over the possession of the town to St. Thomas.[27] It is possible that the

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 484-86.

[27] Hosten, "Is San Thomé in Civitas Iothabes," *IA*, vol. LX, p. 54.

grant was renewed as and when the region passed under different rulers. Bukka I is the co-founder, with his brother Harihara, of the empire of Vijayanagar. The date 1259 could correspond to 1337 if it was according to the Śaka era. Although 1336 is the traditional date of the foundation of the Vijayanagar empire, which later covered the whole of the South, 1337 would be rather too early for the region to have come under Vijayanagar rule. The earliest inscription in this region, belonging to Bukka I, is dated Rākshasa Saṁvatsara 1298,[28] corresponding to 1376. The inscription, coming as it does from Pallikonda (North Arcot District), would show that this region had come under Vijayanagar sway about this period. However, if we take the year of the plates—1259—to be a mistake for 1295, then the year 1373 would approximate the date of the Pallikonda record. As in the lithic inscription, so in this epigraph also the grantee is the Modeliar. Abedara may hide a Christian name or, if it does not, it should make no difference because it was usual for the St. Thomas Christians to bear Hindu names. Finally, the number of years mentioned in the imprecation is usually 60,000 years (shashti varsha sahastrani), 70,000 evidently being a mistake of the translator.

All this while Christianity was making rapid progress in Western India, despite a few setbacks. The Christians on the east coast, however, were hit hard by wars and famines. They dispersed, seeking refuge and asylum elsewhere. According to a palm-leaf *MS.* entitled *Keralattil Marga-valiute Avastha* (The affairs of Christianity in Malabar) :

> A.D. 293. The Vallala converts to Christianity in Kaverippoopattanam (the famous Puhar at the mouth of the northern branch of the river Cauvery) were persecuted by their king. So 72 families embarked on a ship and came to Korakkeni (= Quilon), where there were Christians at that time.[29]

Probably the Chola king had others in his kingdom to increase its

[28] *Annual Reports of South Indian Epigraphy for the Year* 1925-26, pt. I, p. 18 ; pt. II, p. 140 ; 468 of 1925. The year Icarrana Rachan, if it corresponds to Iśvara, would be the correct year because this cyclic year fell in the year 1259. This would not be the case if we take 1295—the corresponding cyclic year for this date being Pramadin.

[29] *KSP*, series 5, p. 254.

prosperity through trade, unlike the Chera king, who had none, and found in the Christians a very valuable commercial asset. And thus it was that the Christians in Kerala developed as an indigenous trading community *par exellence*,[30] and were left alone by their benevolent Chera rulers on questions concerning the Faith.

In the third century the peaceful life of this community was disturbed by the presence among them of a teacher who succeeded in perverting a good many of their number. The palm-leaf *MS.* above referred to, has it that :

> A.D. 315. A sorcerer called Manikka Vachakar came (to Quilon) and converted back to Hinduism 116 persons belonging to 8 of the 72 families from Puhar, 4 of about half a dozen families subsequently come from the Coromandel coast (perhaps from Puhar itself), and 20 families of local Christians (presumably in Quilon).[31]

This Manikkavachakar has been differently identified with Mani, the founder of the creed known after his name, and with Manikka Vāśakar, the Śaivite teacher. The former, it is true, among other countries—Babylon, Persia, and Turkestan—also visited India in the course of his missionary journeys.[32] But it is questionable if he came as far as Malabar and the south. Māṇikkavāchakar lived in the latter half of the seventh century, 660-681, according to the chronology adopted by Mr. C. V. Narayana Ayyar,[33] and is therefore clearly out of the question. He is classed among the famous Śaiva saints and mystics—Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar. His Tiruvāchaka, in glorification of Śiva, has visibly moved the Tamil people, and his verses are redolent with rare spiritual fervour :

I dread not mighty jav'lin dripping gore ;
Nor glance of maids with jewell'd arms !
But those that will not sweetly taste His grace
Whose glance can melt the inmost soul,

[30] Joseph, "Kings and Christians in Kerala," *KSP*, vol. II, series 8, pp. 121-23.

[31] *KSP*, series 5, p. 254.

[32] Mourret, *Histoire Générale de l'Eglise*, p. 391.

[33] Narayana Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Śaivism in India*, p. 462.

Who dances in the hallow'd court,—my Gem
Unstained and pure—nor praise His Name.
Such men of loveless hearts when we behold,
Ah, me ! we feel no dread like this ![34]

We should be careful lest we destroy reputations such as these.

According to Mr. Iṭṭup, writing on the Malabar Church, it was not Mani himself but a Manichean from Persia that visited South India.[35] The writer possibly follows Whitehouse who had written earlier :

> In the third century a certain sorcerer called by them Mānikka-vāchakar, arrived in the Chola country (on the east coast of India), and having deceived and perverted many Christians by his wiles, and sown the seeds of heresy among them, found his way round by land to the Malayalam country. At that time there were many Christians settled in the southern part of Travancore, between Quilon and Kottar ; and in this district he laboured, and by his pretended miracles obtained much the same influence over them as Simon Magus did over the people of Samaria. If anyone was taken ill with serious illness, or there was disease among their cattle, the sorcerer was sent for to breathe over them or mutter his charms and apply his sacred ashes. He taught them to use *muntra* or cabalistic sentences in verse, and also taught them that, if they partook of a mixture, composed of the five products of the cow (a heathen compound), they would find it a specific for all kinds of sickness, and secure long life for themselves. Eight families were perverted by him, and these so far increased as to form at length a community of ninety-six houses, whose numbers had renounced the worship of the true God. The reigning Raja, or Perumal Prince, having granted to their headman, Iravi Corttan, ground, whereupon a settlement was formed called Manigramum, they were called Manigramakars or (as we should say) the people of the village of Manes, and the remnant of their descendants still bear the same name among Syrian Christians.[36]

[34] *Tiravachakam* rendered into English verse by Dr. G. U. Pope. Srinivasa Iyengar, "Tamil Literature," *Classical Age*, pp. 330-31.

[35] Iṭṭup, *History of the Malabar Syrian Christian Church* (in Malayalam), pp. 84-85, cited in Hosten, *Antiquities from San Thomé and Mylapore*, p. 561.

[36] Whitehouse, *The Lingering Light*.

According to Whitehouse, this Manikka Vāsakar was a Manichean.

Now the tradition of the apostasy apart, the Manicheans and Maṇigrāmam are far from being tweedledum and tweedledee. Maṇigrāmam was a trade guild or a community of jewellers,[37] and this guild is to be accepted as a guild of Christian merchants, only because the headman of the guild, Iravi Korttan, who is the recipient of the grant of the brokerage and customs from Vīra-Rāghava Chakravarti, is regarded as a Christian by Mr. K. N. Daniel. He holds that Korttan is "probably derived from the word Karttan i.e., Lord," from which also the term for clergyman among the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar, viz., Kattanar, is derived. But for this explanation, which seems far-fetched, there is nothing Christian about the grant at all. The late Mr. K. M. Panikkar has much in his favour when he says "the only reason for thinking that Maṇigrāmakkar had Christian connections was Col. Macaulay's action in handing over the plate to the Christians when he discovered it at Cochin."[38] In fact, as has been pointed out by Dr. W. Germann, the property with which the Maṇigrāmam was originally endowed now belongs to a Hindu temple.[39] According to the late Mr. T. K. Joseph :

> There are Maṇigrāmakkar even now in Quilon and Kayamkulam, but they are a low class of Śūdras. The high class Śūdras, call them contemptuously Karamukkavar, i.e., "land-fishermen." The old generation of them admits, though not openly, that their ancestors were Christians.[40]

Captain Munro, the British Resident at Travancore, tried to bring them under the jurisdiction of the Syrian bishop. The little community took fright at this step, and in 1837 declared itself as coming under the general category of "Nairs." It is known under the designation "Dhareyaigul" and at the time when Dr. Germann

[37] Joseph, *Malabar Christians and their Ancient Documents*, p. 10.

[38] Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese*, p. 5, n. 1.

[39] Germann, *Die Kirche der Thomaschristen*, p. 117.

[40] Joseph's remarks on Hosten's "Land's Anecdota Syriaca on the Syrians of Malabar," *IA*, LVI, p. 84, n. 13. "In Malayalam Vadugan is a low class Syrian Christian in Malabar. Konkan (=a man of the Kongu country) is another low class among them. Vadugan and Konkan Christians of Malabar may perhaps be descendants of those who came originally from the Telugu and Kongu countries." Joseph, *KSP*, vol. II, series 6, p. 318.

wrote his book its members were distinguished from the Christians by the peculiar way of dressing the hair—the *Kudumi*—which is not kept by other Christians.[41] There is, however, intermarriage between the two communities. It is, therefore, not possible at the present stage of research to say who this Māṇikkavāchakar was. Mr. K. G. Sesha Aiyar has hazarded the guess that he was the Buddhist Tamil heretic Sangamitra "versed in the teachings concerning the exorcism of spirits and so forth," who according to the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvaṁsa*, overcame an orthodox Buddhist theologian in controversy in the reign of king Gothakabhaya, or Meghavarnabhaya, whom Geiger places in A.D. 302-15.[42] The late Mr. T. K. Joseph observes in this connection :

> The coincidence between Geiger's 315 and the 315 of our *MS.* is surprising. The present copy of the *MS.* is of about A.D. 1806 . . . preserved in a Syrian Christian family known as Karuthedathu in Mavalikkara, Travancore. It was impossible for the writer of this *MS.* to get the date 315 from Geiger or Mr. Sesha Aiyar.[43]

By this time Christianity had become fairly widespread in the whole of Iran. Cardinal Tisserant, tracing the growth of the church in Iran from early times down to the fifth century,[44] writes :

> If we are to believe the Chronicle of Arbela, there must have been a bishop from 225, not only at Parat d'Maysan, at the mouth of the Euphrates, but also in Beith Qataraye on the Arab coast to the north of Bahrein. Towards 390 a monastery was founded in one of the islands belonging to the group of Bahrein by a monk of Deir Qoni, native of Maysan.[45] The bishop of the islands is mentioned in the list of the Synod of Isaac held in 410,[46] and there was competition for the See of Masmabig, which is beyond Bahrein.[47] At the same time, Fars was evangelized and had already a bishop in 410, probably at Rewardashir, which was elevated to the dignity of a Metropolitan Church,

[41] Germann, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-15.
[42] *KSP*, series 5, p. 255. [43] *Ibid.*
[44] Tisserant, *op. cit.*, *c.* 195-96.
[45] *Chronique de Seert*, *PO*, t. 5, p. 311.
[46] *Synod Orient.*, p. 34, trans. p. 273. [47] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.

possibly by Yaksallāhā I (415-20), as Ébedjesus would have us believe,[48] in any event, before 486.[49]

The tragic conditions in the Indian church, ending in apostasy, may have attracted the attention of the brethren in Persia and thus it was that during the Patriarchate of Shaḥlūpha and Pāpa, say about 295-300, the old prelate David resigned his diocese of Parat d'Maysan and left for India. Bishop David, says the chronicler, made numerous conversions,[50] among whom were probably some who had lapsed from the Faith, if, of course, by India Malabar is intended. From this fact it cannot be inferred that the church in India was affiliated to the Persian church. True, according to Gelasius, John of Persia, who took part in the Council of Nicaea, describes himself in signing the decrees of the Council as "(bishop) of the whole of Persia and of Greater India."[51] Nevertheless, as has been pointed out by Tisserant, in the lists published by Gelzer, John simply styles himself "John the Persian" or "of Persia." This is an important omission which would show that, writing as Gelasius did in 475, when it may be considered as certain that the Indian church received its bishops from Persia, he unconsciously imported into an earlier period of the Council a state of things which was true of his own times.[52]

According to the tradition recorded by Matthew, a Jacobite priest of Malabar, the apostasy above referred to, was followed by dissensions among the Christians that had remained loyal to the Faith, which resulted in further apostasies. The Christians in Malabar had been joined by brethren fleeing from the persecution on the Coromandel coast. The refugees had been welcomed by their fellow-Christians in Malabar. As the same writer puts it :

> Seeing them, their brethren, the faithful of Malabar, rejoiced with the greatest joy, and, according to the custom of the faith-

[48] Ebedjesus, "Collectio Canonum," tr. VIII, *c.* XV, in Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, t. p.X^a, 304, trans. p. 141.

[49] *Synod Orient.*, p. 53, trans. p. 300.

[50] *Chronique de Seert, PO*, t. IV, p. 230, cited in Tisserant, *op. cit.*, *c.* 196.

[51] Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, p. 7.

[52] *Ibid.* Mingana's assertions that Christianity in India before the third century was linked up with its stronger and more Catholic sister of the Persian empire and south east Asia, has no basis in fact, and is in contradiction to the Indian tradition. Mingana, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

ful, they became bound to one another by ties of affinity.

Everything went on well for a time. Adds Matthew :

> Afterwards, however, when 160 truly Christian families had long been without presbyters and leaders, dissension arose among them, for what cause I know not : that is, some of them renounced the orthodox faith, and others did not. Those who renounced it were 96 families ; and those who retained it were 64.[53]

The situation, we are told, was revealed in a vision to the Metropolitan of Edessa, who reported it to the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The Catholicos immediately convoked an assembly of bishops and the faithful at which it was decided to send to Malabar a merchant named Thomas of Jerusalem, to inquire into the situation. When Thomas returned and made his report, it was resolved to reinforce the Christians in India by settling among them well-instructed Christians from the Middle East. In A.D. 345 the Catholicos sent these Christians whom he had carefully chosen from Jerusalem, Baghdad, and Nineveh, together with deacons and priests, to Malabar under the leadership of the same Thomas of Jerusalem, and accompanied by the bishop who had seen the vision.[54]

This tradition, however, has been submitted to a searching test by the late Fr. Hosten, noted Jesuit historian, who, referring to it, says :

> I look with the greatest suspicion on the mention of Jerusalem and Antioch in this affair and at this date. If, as Fr. Monserrate says (1579), Thomas Cana came a first time to India via Hormuz (and by what other route do we suppose him to have come?), we do not expect him to have communicated with anyone else than the Bishop of Edessa. All running to and fro between Edessa, Jerusalem and Antioch for the sake of the Bishop of Edessa's vision or dream must appear fanciful, or inspired by party-spirit.[55]

[53] Hosten, *op. cit.*, p. 231. Matthew wrote *c.* A.D. 1730.

[54] Germann, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85 ; Tisserant, *DTC*, vol. XIV, *c.* 3092-93.

[55] Hosten, "Land's Anecdota Syriaca on the Syrians of Malabar," *IA*, vol LVI, p. 82, n. 18.

Mingana also has adverse comments to make. For in that year (345) and the next, the Catholicos of the East Barba'-Shemin was in prison (February 345—January 9, 346) in which he suffered martyrdom, and after his death the See remained vacant for twenty years. In the short terms of office, none of the Catholicoi could have possibly attended to the business of the merchant Thomas from Jerusalem. Mingana, in rejecting the story, dubs it "absolutely unhistorical and chronologically stupid," assigning Thomas Cana to 795-824.[56]

The visit of Theophilus, the Arian bishop, in A.D. 350, is a further proof of antedating a future event by several decades at least.

It has also been pretended that the immigration of these Christians was actuated by the persecution of Christianity under the Sassanid king Shapur II, just as after the overthrow of the Sassanids the persecution of the Zoroastrianism by the Muslims in the eighth century, compelled the Zoroastrians to seek refuge in another part of India, viz., Gujarat. But there is not the slightest allusion to it in the contemporary records. This surmise about the immigration of the Christians from Persia consequent on the persecution there, arose from the date afforded by the chronogram Śovala which synchronizes with the reign of Shapur the Great in Persia. But we can be sure that this date is not according to the Christian era, which was not even in existence at that time. So we have to look for it among the various eras current at that time in Kerala—Kali era, Quilon era, Greek era, or even *Anno Mundi*. There can be no doubt about the emigration of the Christians from Persia, and the present tradition may refer to the arrival of these Persian Christians at some date. There is a reference in the *Gaudavāho* of Vākpati, who, writing in the first half of the eighth century, places the Parasikas north of Cape Comorin and on the sea-coast below the southern Sahyadris. It is certain that this part of the west coast is the present Kerala. Now, among the people of Kerala, the Christians are the only community claiming connections with the Persians, i.e., the Parasikas. Vinayāditya, the western Chalukya king (681-696), is said to have levied tribute from the kings of Kamera or Kavera, Parasika, Simhala, and other islands. The order in which these places are mentioned makes it clear that the Parasikas here have reference to a people settled between Kavera and Simhala i.e., between the Chola country and Ceylon, namely

[56] Mingana, *op. cit.*, p. 44 n.

to the north of Cape Comorin. This would place the emigration of the Persian Christians some time in the fifth century, giving them sufficient time to acquire prominence in that part of the country where they settled down.[57] This would also explain how the Persian Church acquired jurisdiction over the Indian Church, what with the flourishing settlements of the Persian Christians scattered along the west coast as far as Ceylon. The late Mr. T. K. Joseph says :

> In the *tubdon*, a portion of the Malabar Jacobite Liturgy, the Catholicos of Seleucia, the ancient head centre of Christianity, in the Persian Empire, is still loyally remembered in the Sunday service. It is not known when this practice was introduced into Malabar.[58]

There should now be no doubt left that the practice started at the time when the Persian Church established its control over the Indian Church. Thomas Cana may have led this emigration, along with the bishop Mar Joseph, as the song has it :

> By the will of the Triune God St. Thomas (is) in Mylapore.
> Without mishaps we arrived in Cranganore.
> In the land of the Malabar king our reputation today
> Must be fittingly recognized by the monarch.
> At the sight of the king the heart was gladdened.
> To clear the way for the heirs of St. Thomas
> I found you today not transgressing the commandments.[59]

Naturally enough, the new-comers could settle in the country of their adoption only with the consent of the local authorities. Thomas, therefore, repaired to the king of Malabar, who was glad to have among his subjects a community which had attained to a high stage of culture. He not only allowed them to settle in his kingdom, but granted them several privileges which he confirmed by a royal charter. This charter, however, has long been lost. The plates on which the charter was inscribed had been given by Bishop Jacob to the Portuguese Factor at Cochin for safe

[57] Vākpati, *Gaudavāho*, vv. 431-39.
[58] Joseph, "*Malabar Christians and their Ancient Documents*," p. LX.
[59] Joseph, "Thomas Cana," *IA*, vol. VIII pp. 103-04.

custody in the sixteenth century. They were, however, later taken to Portugal by the Franciscans, and cannot now be traced.[60] Happily, before they were taken out of the country, they had been translated into Portuguese. This translation is found in the papers of Bishop Roz, now deposited in the British Museum, in a *MS.* volume, dated 1604, which translation, however, does not correspond to that of the learned Jew when the plates were first deposited in the Factory. As rendered into English by the late H. Hosten, the text of the plates is as follows :

> May Coquarangon be prosperous, enjoy long life and live one hundred thousand years, servant of God, strong, true, just, full of good works, reasonable, powerful, over the whole earth, happy, conquering, glorious, rightly prosperous in the ministry of God, in Malavar, in the great city of the great Idol./While he reigned at the time of Mercury of February, on the seventh day of the month of March, before the full moon, the same king, Coquarangon being in Carnelur, there arrived in a ship Thomas Cananeo, a chief man, who had resolved to see the uttermost part of the East./ And some men, seeing him as he arrived, went to inform the king. And the king himself came and saw and called the said chief man Thomas, and he disembarked and came before the king, who spoke graciously to him ; and to honour him he gave him in surname his own name, calling him Coquarangon Cananeo. And he received this honour from the king and went to rest in his place. And the king gave him the city of Magoderpatanam for ever. And the said king, being in his great prosperity, went one day to hunt in the forest, and the same king surrounded the whole forest. And he called in haste for Thomas, who came and stood before the king in a lucky hour. And the king questioned the soothsayer. And the king afterwards spoke to Thomas, (saying) that he would build a city in that forest. And he answered to the king, first making reverence, and said: "I desire this forest for myself." And the king granted it to him and gave it for ever.

[60] For the circumstances under which the plates were placed in the Portuguese factory the reader is referred to the chapter on "The St. Thomas Christians and the Portuguese," Fr. Hosten says : "At my request the 'British Resident' at Travancore-Cochin, Mr. C. W. E. Cotton, wrote to the British ambassador in Lisbon, and a search was made at Torre do Tombo, but without success."

And at once, the next day, he cleared the forest and cast his eyes on it in the same year, on the eleventh of April, and gave it as an inheritance to Thomas at the time and year aforesaid, in the king's name, who laid the first brick for the Church and for the house of Thomas Cananeo, and made there a city for all (of them), and entered the Church and there made prayer the same day./ After these things, Thomas himself went to the king's palaces and offered him presents, and afterwards he asked the king to give that land to him and to his descendants ; and he measured two hundred and sixty-four elephant cubits, and gave them to Thomas and his descendants for ever : and at the same time sixty-two houses which immediately were erected there, and gardens and trees, with their enclosures, and with their paths and boundaries and inner yards. And he granted him seven kinds of musical instruments, and all the honours, and to speak (?) and walk like a king, and that at the weddings the women might give a certain signal with their finger in their mouth, and he granted him distinct, weight, and to adorn the ground with cloths, and he granted the royal fans, and to double the sandal (mark) on the arm, and a royal tent (*2 or 3 words not deciphered*) in every part of the kingdom for ever,/and besides five tributes to Thomas, and to his lineage, and to his confederates, for men, and for women, and for all his relatives, and to the children of his law for ever. The said king gave it in his name. Witnesses: these persons :

Codaxericanden.

Cherucaraprotachatencomeren, the king's chief door-keeper.

Areundencounden, the king's councillor.

Amen (atecou)ndeng(ueru)len, Captain of the army.

Chirumalap (ro ?) tatiriuicramencomeren, Regedor of the East side in Malavar.

Peru (i) ualatiataadi (ten),.....singer (?) of the said king.

Perubal (atia) tacottocoude, guard of the king's port (?) (gate?)

Bichremenchinguen (de Car turte), the said king's chamberlain.

A(nan) iperumcouil, Scrivener of (all?) the affairs, with his own hand wrote this sealed (?sedilat(a)?) and also lucky writing.[61]

Thomas Cana founded his settlement in the delta of the Periyar and called it Mahadevar Pattanam (city of the Great God) of the

[61] Translation by Fr. Hosten, *KSP*, series 4, pp. 180-82. Also see the list of the privileges at the end of the chapter.

Malabar Christian tradition, or Mahodayapuram of Malabar Sanskrit works, i.e., Makotai or Makodai. For, as the late Mr. T. K. Joseph has observed, "the name Makodai is not found mentioned in the earlier Tamil works but Muziris and Vanchi occur in them." "Is it possible," he asks, "that the name Makotai was, for some unknown reason, given to his new town by Knayi Thomman in 345[62] after Mahoza, a famous town in his own country?"[63] But perhaps it is more reasonable to hold that the new town was named after the Great God whom the Christians adored. This town has since been regarded by the St. Thomas Christians as the centre of their northern diocese, as is Kurakkenikkollam (Quilon) is regarded by them as the centre of their southern diocese.[64]

The high esteem in which Thomas Cana was held by the Chera king is evident from the fact that according to tradition he conferred on him and his companions the title of "Mapilla" (son-in-law), while the Chera called his own indigenous subjects "Pillais," i.e., sons. Says Mr. T. K. Joseph:

> Savarisu Mudalali, the Quilon Mudalalis, Kulattu Koshi Mappila, Parayil Tharakan, Adangaprathu Tharakan, Mathu Tharakan, Kochammachan Mudalali, etc., are well-known names among the Syrian Christians.[65]

The new-comers merged with the old Christians, and both taking to trade, what with the port of Muziris in their hands and their connections with the Middle Eastern countries, they rose to great prosperity. In the absence of the Vaishya or trader class in the Hindu caste hierarchy of Kerala, the Christians found it easy to step into the breach, and they were welcomed by every ruling family.[66] Thus it was that Christian settlements—variously known as Kampolams, angadis, and theruvus—rose in course of time at Thiruvancode, Quilon, Kayamkulam, Kallada, Kundara, Tiruvalla, Kottayam, Muttam, Parur, Iringalakkudu, Palur, and many other important centres all over Kerala.[67] They so ingratiated

[62] Of whatever era.
[63] Joseph, *KSP*, vol. II, series 10, p. 256.
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] Joseph, "Kings and Christians in Kerala," *KSP*, vol. II, series 8, p. 122.
[66] Thomas, "Kerala in Early Days," *Kerala Studies*, pp. 39-40.
[67] Joseph, *art et. loc. cit.*

themselves with the Hindu society that they were given the privilege of "removing the conventional or ceremonial pollution for oil, ghee, honey, molasses, and other provisions taken to a temple."[68]

The Malabar tradition also has it that Thomas Cana was the progenitor of the Christian dynasty of Villiyārvattam near Cochin, though its eponym is derived from Belearte. It would appear that as the number of the Christians increased, they began spreading over all the kingdoms of Kerala, and it was found necessary that they should have someone to answer for them in their dealings with other communities and the State, and also to protect them from the tyranny of the local rulers. It is possibly to one of his successors that Pope John XXII addressed himself in 1330 while sending him Bishop Jordanus. In 1439 Pope Eugenius IV sent envoys to king Thomas with a letter which commenced thus :

> To my most beloved son in Christ, Thomas, the illustrious Emperor of the Indians, health and apostolic benediction. There often has reached us a constant rumour that Your Serenity and all who are subjects of your kingdom are true Christians.

It is possibly this same Thomas that is described by Poggi Bracciolini, the secretary of the above Pontiff, in his *Historia de Variatate Fortunae*, liv. IV, written *c.* 1438, in which the author says :

> While preparing to insert in this work for the information of my readers the various accounts respecting the Indians related to me by Nicola . . . there arrived another person from Upper India, towards the north. He says that there is a kingdom twenty days' journey from Cathay, of which the king and all the inhabitants are Christians, but heretics, being said to be Nestorians.[69]

There is an inscription dated 1450 which records the death of "Raja Thômma of Villiyarvattam, who resided at Chennamangalan, on 2-1-1450."[70]

In connection with this subject of kings and Christians in Malabar,

[68] Joseph, "Rajasimha Inscription at Talakad," *IA*, vol. LVII, p. 29.
[69] Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 33.
[70] Joseph, "A Christian Dynasty in Malabar," *IA*, vol. LII, p. 158.

an interesting find is of a statuette at Nilamperur on the eastern shore of the Vembanad lake in Travancore. The statuette has a conspicuous cross in the middle of a string of pearls or a rosary of *Tulsi* beads hanging from the neck. This was accidentally dug up from the floor of an old *mandapa* or pandal, which, according to the Hindu inhabitants of the place, covers the tomb of Pallivanavar. The workmen also struck against a large stone slab in which a cross was found. The tomb is just outside the surrounding walls of the Palliyil Bhagavati temple, and it speaks volumes for the friendliness that has existed between the Hindus and the Christians, and the magnanimity of heart of the former that the authorities of the temple every year request the formal sanction from Pallivanavar in the tomb outside to begin the grand annual festival of the temple.[71]

The late Mr. T. K. Joseph thought that this personage may be identical with the Perumal Pallivanavar, a Kerala king of the *Kerololpathi*, a legendary history of Malabar. He has assigned dates to him from chronograms cited in that work in the fourth century A.D. Pallivanavar lived at Kilivoor, a few miles from Nilamperur, and set up the bearded Buddha image in the shrine near the Bhagavati temple there.[72] It is possible that this Perumal's curiosity was roused by the religion of the Christians who had made their presence felt all over Kerala, while he was making a comparative study of the other religions—Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Being satisfied with Christianity, he embraced the latter.[73] Nambudiris of the locality resented the conversion of the king, quitted the place and are reluctant, even today, to go and live at Kilivoor as well as at Nilamperur.[74] The term Pallivanavar, says Mr. T. K. Joseph, literally means an honoured personage who held sway in, or over the church, and he remarks :

[71] Joseph, "*Malabar Christians and their Ancient Documents*," pp. 8-9.

[72] *KSP*, series 3, p. 157. Mr. Joseph reports that in the Oriental Manuscripts Library at Madras there is an ola *MS.* marked V. 6.27, and entitled *Paramapada Prakasa Vazhi*, purporting to be the work of Pallivanavar.

[73] Cheriyan, "Pallivanavar," *KSP*, series 3, p. 155. Mr. P. K. P. Panikkar thinks that the notion that Pallivanavar went to Mecca arose on account of the misleading words "markkpaki" meaning became a convert, for "makkan puki" which means "entered Mecca." Moreover, if he lived in the fourth century, he could not have become a Muslim, as Islam did not exist in the fourth century.

[74] *KSP*, series 3, p. 157.

It is an interesting point to be elucidated by further research whether the drapery, head-gear, coiffure and the "rod and staff" correspond to any style of episcopal paraphernalia in vogue in any hot region of Christendom.[75]

In 354, Malabar was visited by Theophilus, a native of the Maldives, islands off the west coast of India. He had been sent by the islanders, when quite young, as a hostage to the Romans during the reign of Constantine the Great (A.D. 306-37). It is probable that the Romans exacted hostages from the islanders as a safeguard against their piratical activities and to prevent them from confiscating the many ships that ran ashore on the reefs.[76] Baptized at Constantinople, Theophilus became a monk, was ordained a deacon by Eusebius of Nicodemia, and was consecrated an Arian Bishop about A.D. 350.[77] He was sent out by Constantius for the express purpose of spreading the Arian doctrines in the Himyar and in the country of Axam, in his own island and in India. Philostorgius, the Arian historian, tells us that he reformed many abuses which then prevailed in the Indian Church, among which was the practice of remaining seated during the reading of the Gospel.[78]

It is possible to infer from the proceedings of Theophilus that these abuses had set in owing to the distance of India from other centres of Christianity. Their prevalence would also show that the Indian church was not connected with other centres and had, possibly, traditions of its own in the matter of observances in the church, and surely it also had its own ministers. But this church maintained friendly relations with Edessa and with Seleucia-Ctesiphon on account of their almost common origin. It is therefore not surprising that Indian priests should be sent to Persia for ecclesiastical training. We are told that a priest from India named Daniel actually helped Ishodad to translate from the Greek original into Syriac a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans by Mar Komai.[79] This is by the way the first translation of a Greek work into Syriac and the fact that Ishodad was helped by Daniel would

[75] Joseph, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[76] Hosten, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

[77] The dates "before 356" and "c. 354" assigned "for the beginning of Theophilus's mission" by Medlycott are questioned by Hosten.

[78] Philostorgius, *HE*, t. III. c. IV-VI, *PG*, cited by Tisserant, *op. cit.*, vol. XIV, *c.* 3092.

[79] Mingana, *art. cit*, p. 28.

show that while the former was weak in Greek, Komai was well versed in it.

According to Mingana, it may be inferred from this incident that the language of India was Syriac at the beginning of the fifth century, and not any other Indian dialect.[80] Now, the question of any Indian dialect apart, it may with better reason be inferred that Greek was the liturgical language of India, a fact which will very well explain Daniel's proficiency in it, because if Syriac was the language he would be as deficient in it as his master Ishodad, in the absence of a liturgical incentive to learn the language. It is not surprising that he was also conversant with Syriac since it was the medium of instruction for his ecclesiastical studies in Persia. In fact, it would appear that Greek had continued to be the liturgical language of India ever since the evangelization of the people by St. Thomas. We have already seen that Greek was current at Takshaśila. It was also current all along the coast on account of the Graeco-Roman trading colonies there. As Toynbee has correctly remarked :

> The Basic Greek in which the New Testament was written in the first century of the Christian era was spoken and understood from Travancore to the hinterland of Marseilles.[81]

There are no traces of Greek left in Kerala today, except for an inscription in this language on a bell in the belfry of the church at Kuduthuruthy, some five miles to the west of Kurvalangad in north Travancore. This is a very old church, assigned to A.D. 335 in the *Catholic Directory* (Madras, 1924), but to the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century by Fr. Bernard.[82] The tradition in the village is that the bell was presented by Koramen,[83] which name appears in the bell as KORsomeN according to the reading of the late Mr. T. K. Joseph. Mr. Joseph thinks that this word stands for KORAtomeN, the author of the inscription having replaced t with s, for the purpose of coining the chronogram. Now, this

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West*, p. 290.

[82] Bernard, *History of the St. Thomas Christians* (in Malayalam), vol. I, p. 309, cited in Joseph, "A Travancore Inscription in Greek Script," *JIH*, vol. XXVII, p. 184.

[83] According to Fr. J. K. Aenekatt, in his letter to the present author, dated June 26, 1957.

chronogram corresponds to 571, which date, if it is according to the Kali age, would be 3571 i.e., 461. Mr. Joseph is inclined to assign a much later date to the inscription, but there is no point in doing so—for the reason that it was surely not the intention of the donor that the inscription should be "Greek and Latin" to the public. It stands to reason to suppose that if he chose to inscribe his name in Greek, it was because this was the language used in the church, and hence nothing could be more appropriate for an inscription on a church bell than the liturgical language.

The position was very much the same in Socotra with the exception that here Greek was the language which the people spoke, having been originally settled there by the Ptolemies. However, when the Persian Church imposed her ecclesiastical yoke on the islanders, Greek, which must have been their liturgical language, had to yield place to Syriac, even though they did not understand a word of it. Referring to them in the sixth century, Cosmas says :

> There are clergy there also, ordained and sent from Persia to minister among the people of the island, and a multitude of Christians. We sailed past the island, but did not land. I met, however, with people from it who were on their way to Ethiopia and they spoke Greek.

Referring to their *kashis*, João de Barros, the Portuguese historian, says :

> They repeated their prayers antiphonically in a foreign language which he calls Chaldee.[84]

It is evident, therefore, that Chaldee (meaning Syriac) had been imposed upon them by the Persian Church.

When exactly the Indian Church was caught in the Nestorian net cannot be decided in the absence of any document giving us a precise date. But it is certain that by 530 it had been absorbed by the Persian Church. Actually, in the last quarter of the fifth century, Nestorian missioners are seen making strenuous attempts to capture the Indian Church to their doctrines, Ma'na, whose literary activity filled this quarter of the century, sent his trans-

[84] Yule, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 409.

lations of Diodorus for the benefit of the faithful in India,[85] while we are told that the Catholicos, Sabriso I, gave to Masvata the perfume and the presents which had come to him from India and China, a clear indication that he had followers there.[86] Cosmas (above referred to), who had passed through India sometime about 545, remarks as follows about the Christian settlements he came in contact with on the Indian coast :

> This I vouch to be veritable fact, from what I have seen and heard in the many places which I have visited. Even in Taprobane (i.e., Ceylon), an island in Further India, where the Indian Sea is, there is a church of Christians, with clergy and a body of believers, but I know not whether there be any Christians in the parts beyond it. In the country called Male, (i.e., Malabar), where the pepper grows, there is also a church, and at another place called Calliana there is moreover a bishop, who is appointed from Persia. In the island again, called the island of Dioscorides (i.e., Socotra), which is situated in the same Indian Sea, and where the inhabitants speak Greek, having been originally colonists sent thither by the Ptolemies who succeeded Alexander the Macedonian, there are clergy who receive their ordination in Persia, and are sent on to the island, and there is also a multitude of Christians.[87]

From this passage it is evident that the whole of the Indian Church had already been incorporated into the Persian Church, doubtless under the control of the Metropolitan of Rewardashir.

During the times of Cosmas, the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was captured by the followers of Nestorius. After Emperor Zeno ordered Cyrus, bishop of Edessa, to purge his diocese of Nestorians (A.D. 489), the latter had been compelled to seek asylum in Persia. Among them were the banished professors and students of the Persian school of Edessa, the centre of Nestorian teaching. They found protection under Barsumas, the Metropolitan of Nisibis, himself a most ardent follower of Nestorius. Barsumas, at this time, held the office of the Persian Governor of the frontier. With the influence he possessed at the court, he so played on the feelings

[85] *Chronique de Seert*, *PO*, t. VII, p. 117.
[86] *PO*, t. XIII, p. 497.
[87] Cosmas, *The Christian Topography*, pp. 118-19.

of the Persian king as to make him believe that on account of the close association between the state and church in the Roman empire, the actual holders of the Sees in his territory were disguised partisans of his enemies, the Romans, and that it was in his interests to replace them by others owing allegiance directly to the Persian monarch. With the help of the secular arm the Nestorians soon possessed themselves of all the Sees in Persia including the chief See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (A.D. 496). Thus within seven years of its suppression in the Roman empire, Nestorianism triumphed in the eastern world beyond the Roman frontiers. The See of Rewardashir was now being held by Patrick, a prominent Nestorian, and the Indian Church, depending as it did on Rewardashir for the supply of its clergy, soon came under Nestorian influence.[88]

With the conquest of Iran by the rising power of Islam, the Nestorian Church suffered an irretrievable setback. It had prospered under the Zoroastrian Sassanids, as the Christian counterpart of the national religion, and manifested an extraordinary vitality and vigour. The new regime relegated the Christians to a class of inferior citizenship, that of Zimmis, with all the disabilities which that status entailed. Naturally enough, many Christians succumbed to the pecuniary attractions held out by Islam. But others, who prized the Faith more than life, died veritable martyrs to Christ in the sanguinary attacks of the Kurds or the massacres ordered by the authorities; they could have easily saved themselves by merely expressing a desire to accept Islam. What seems to have made the rapid spread of Nestorianism possible was not its doctrinal content but its other assets. Sir Wallis Budge writes :

> . . . it is impossible to think that the Chinese, Mongols, Tartars, Turks, Persians, Armenians and the peoples of the Euphrates Valley and Arabia, as nations would understand the details of doctrine which made the teaching of Nestorius anathema to the Jacobites and Monophysites. For such matters they would care nothing, but they all would appreciate the superior mental faculties of the Nestorian missionaries and traders, and their great physical energy, and above all their knowledge of medicine, and their practical treatment of the diseases of the body, and the healings they effected.[89]

[88] Medlycott, *op. cit.*, p. 682.

[89] Wallis Budge, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

But even before the persecution unleashed by Islam, schism had raised its ugly head in the Nestorian Church. There are allusions in the correspondence of Isoy'ahb III, (in the last quarter of the seventh century), to the separatist tendency of the metropolitans of Rewardashir, who by their attitude caused refractoriness among the bishops of India. Isoy'ahb says that Christianity extended not only as far as India, but as far as Qalah or Quillah, undoubtedly the Kalah of the Arab geographers in the Straits of Malacca.[90] Isoy'ahb is without doubt referring to the expansion achieved not only during his own days, but also during the golden age of the Nestorian Church.

This tendency towards separatism and schism was aided and abetted by the Muslim rulers. Hadjadj, the governor of Iraq, encouraged John the Leper, the Metropolitan of Nisibis, to usurp the chief See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon; and when the latter died, he prevented Henaniso, the lawful Catholicos from entering into his diocese. For twenty years the chief See remained without a pontiff, and each one, as Mari observes, did what he pleased.[91] A large number of Christians in southern Mesopotamia were lost to the church. The Nedjranites, who had reached the high figure of forty thousand at Hijra, were reduced to but five thousand at the accession of Omar II ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (717).[92] Matters improved somewhat when the Caliphate was removed from Medina to Damascus in Mesopotamia and came under the spell of liberal influences of Iran. The transfer was favourable to the Nestorian Church. As the saying went, it was better to deal with God than with His Saints. The church had suffered at the hands of the various governors of Iraq. It now profited by the vicinity of the Abbasid Caliphs. For the moment, however, the attitude of the government continued unchanged. On his accession al-Mansur found the See of Seleucia contested by two rival candidates. Souris had succeeded in receiving consecration with the aid of a governor, whom he had heavily bribed, and doing violence to the consecrating Metropolitan. He attacked the elected prelate, James, the metropolitan of Beit-Lapat. Under the influence of the partisans of Souris, the Caliph ordered James to be imprisoned. He then

[90] Mingana, *art. cit.*, p. 33.

[91] Streek, S. V. in *Encyclopedie de l'Islam*, t. II, pp. 710-12, cited in Tisserant, "Nestorienne (l'Eglise)," *DTC*, vol. XI, p. 197.

[92] Mari, *op. cit.*, p. 64 seq., trans. p. 57, cited in Tisserant, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

had him released, and finally ordered imprisonment of both the rivals. The result was that during the seventeen years of his pontificate, James spent seven years in prison.[93] But the exigencies of the administration compelled the Caliphs to recruit the administrative personnel from the well-instructed and highly cultivated Christian community. Almost all the physicians, astronomers, and philosophers at the court of al-Mansur and Haroun al-Rashid were Christians. These could make their influence felt on the government and secure a fair deal to their community.

Timothy (780-823), the new Catholicos, fought hard against this separatism of Rewardashir, which carried India into the schism together with herself. But, says Barhebraeus,

> . . . the recalcitrant bishops replied to him: "We are the disciples of the Apostle Thomas, we have no relations with the See of Mari."[94]

It may be noted here that it was for the first time on this occasion that the style "Christians of St. Thomas," was used.[95]

In fact, persecuted at home and divided against itself, the Nestorian Church was unable to recapture its glorious past. It neglected its distant missions, sending prelates to India at irregular intervals. During this period, Christianity completely disappeared from the east coast of India, the people lapsing into their former practices in the absence of a ministering clergy. The Nestorian Church did have its second spring, but the activity which this epoch witnessed did not affect the Indian Church.

But Christianity was saved in Malabar and the west coast mainly because the Christians had succeeded in securing from the local chiefs a certain political status. The privileges granted to Thomas Cana were repeated by the local chiefs, and are recorded in a copper-plate charter, the Quilon Church plates. This charter, consisting of six plates, has been placed in A.D. 880, on the supposition that Sthanu Ravi who issued the charter was a contemporary of the Chola king Āditya I (877-907). It is partly in Tamil, partly in

[93] Perier, *Vie d'al-Hadjadj ibn Yousof d'apres les Sources arbes*, in Bibliothèques de l'Ecole des Hautes-Etudes, Fasc. 151.

[94] Mari, *op. cit.*, p. 69, trans. p. 61.

[95] *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, t. II, p. 171, cited in Tisserant, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-98.

[E. R. Hambye, S.J.]

2nd Syro-Persian Cross (11th 12th-century)
Old Suddist (Knanaya) Syrian Church

Pehlavi, partly in Arabic, and is attested by four Jewish signatories. It would appear from these documents that the Christians were confirmed in their high place in the social hierarchy of Malabar, a position which they enjoyed along with other foreign elements in the local population, such as the Jews.[96]

The charter of 824 was preceded by the arrival of two Nestorian bishops, Mar Sabriso, and Mar Peroz, who settled themselves near Quilon.[97] Their memory is preserved in the local tradition under the names of Soper Iso and Prodho, which also associates them with the building of a church at Quilon. After their death, they were buried in the church they had erected. They were regarded as pious men and were later revered as saints. Their own church was dedicated to them eventually, followed by the dedication of other churches.

In the course of his reform Archbishop Menezes changed the dedication of these churches to the other saints in the Roman calendar.[98]

There is very little information on the church in India in the subsequent centuries till the arrival in the country of the Latin monks at the close of the thirteenth century. A number of inscriptions in Pehlavi on crosses show the connections of the Malabar Church with the Middle East. Two identical crosses at two places as far apart as Mylapore on the east coast, at the traditional site of the martyrdom of the Apostle, and in a church at Kottayam in Travancore, both bear one and the same inscription in Pehlavi. Burnell assigned the inscription to the sixth or seventh century A.D., on palaeographical grounds. It gives no historical details, but merely states, according to Winckworth :

> My Lord Christ, have mercy upon Afrās, son of Chahārbukt, the Syrian, who cut this.[99]

But, according to Dr. Henning of Cambridge, it reads :

[96] Winckworth, "Note on the Pahlavi Signatures," *KSP*, series 6, pp. 320-23; Joseph, "Malabar Miscellany," *IA*, vol. LVIII, pp. 14-15. The Kottayam plate of Vira-Raghava Chakravarty is not a Christian document if as Joseph suggests Kottan is derived from Kotwal.

[97] Rae, *The Syrian Church in Malabar*, pp. 155-65.

[98] Mingana, *op. cit.*, p. 508, cited in Tisserant, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[99] Winckworth, "A New Interpretation of Pahlavi Cross-inscriptions," *KPS*, series 3, p. 166-68.

My Lord Christ, have mercy upon Afrās, son of Chahārbukt, son of Givargis, who set this up.[100]

A third cross which is found in the same church at Kottayam bears the same inscription, but preceded by Gal., VI, 14 in Syriac characters of the tenth century :

But far be it from me to glory, save in cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ.[101]

Unlike the Nestorian crosses in China, where the petals are faced upwards in some, and upwards and as well as downwards in others, in the St. Thomas crosses the petals face invariably downwards, and issue as it were from the two sides of the cross. Again, the Chinese cross is deposited on the lotus, whereas the St. Thomas cross is mounted on Calvary and the petals, as it were, issue from the cross at its base.[102] The crosses are sometimes found in the churches in association with peacocks and doves. This association is to symbolize the death of Our Lord and thereby the redemption of mankind, and His resurrection. As Hulme has truly remarked :

The Peacock, like the dove, is a very favourite form in Byzantine art, though nowadays thought of rather as an emblem of vanity or pride, it was in earlier days regarded as the symbol of the Resurrection. Hence it is generally represented as standing upon a small ball or globe, the glorified spirit rising above all mundane cares. Many good examples of it may be seen in the mosaics of Ravenna and Venice.[103]

NOTE

The following are some of the privileges, enumerated by the late Mr. T. K. Joseph, giving their correct form :

1. Taṇṭę: a kind of palanquin ; (2) Pallakkę: another kind of

[100] Joseph, "Christian and Non-Christian Crosses," *JIH*, 28, p. 111, n. 1.
[101] Burnell, "Some Pehlavi Inscriptions in South India," *IA*, III, pp. 308-16.
[102] Foster, "Crosses from the Walls of Zaitun," *JRAS*, pp. 1-24.
[103] Hulme, *Symbolism in Christian Art*, p. 191.

palanquin; (3) Paravatâni: carpet; (4) Pañchavaṭam: chain of gold hung from the neck; (5) Veñchâmaram: *chauri* or fly-whisk; (6) Ālvaṭṭam: fan made of peacock feathers; (7) Taḷa: fan used as banner or standard; (8) Kuṭa: a costly umbrella of coloured silk; (9) Naṭanaṭâṭṭe: shouting *naṭa, naṭa*, i.e., "on, on," in a procession. This is done by men. (10) Nârivâykkurava: lingual cheers by women; (11) Añchinam vâdyaṅṅal; five kinds of musical instruments, viz., two varieties of drums, gong, cymbals and trumpet; (12) Naṭapâvâṭa: walking cloth (cloth spread on the road for walking along); (13) Pakalviḷakkẹ: daytime lamp; (14) Maṇakkôlam: small decorated pavilion or canopied dais for seating the bride and bridegroom when they have returned from church after the marriage ceremony; (15) Chaṇṇayum chaṇṇamelkkeṭṭiyum: a seat with an awning; (16) Uchchippu: flower-like ornament for the crown of the head of women; (17) Neṭṭippaṭṭam: ornament covering the forepart of the head of women; (18) Kachchappuṛam: a chain belt of gold or silver; (19) Munkaippatakkam: ornament for the forearm; (20) Tôḷvaḷa: bracelet for the upper arm; (21) Virachaṅṅala: wrist chain of gold granted to heroes; (22) Viratanṭa: anklet for heroes; (23) Kâlchilampẹ: tinkling foot ornament for women; (24) Puṇul: thread or chain worn baldric-wise; (25) Chaṅkuchakram: conch-shell for blowing, and the discus; (26) Iṭupaṭi: drawbridge at the gate; (27) Makaratôraṇam: ornamental arches temporarily put up for festive occasions; (28) Nantâviḷakke; lamp burning day and night; (29) Hastakaṭakam: bracelet for the hand or wrist; (30) Kanakamuṭi: gold crown for bridegroom's head; (31) Ābharaṇaṅṅaḷ: ornaments in general; (32) Ānamêḷ maṇṇunir: purificatory water brought on an elephant.

Joseph, "Thomas Cana," vol. LVII, p. 161, n. 100.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LATIN MISSIONS

WITH HER ENERGIES wholly absorbed in the arduous task of evangelizing the young and vigorous peoples of northern Europe, Rome could hardly turn her attention to the East during the centuries that followed the separation of the Persian Church. In the time of the Persian schism, in Europe, the Christian religion had been confined, for the most part, to the old Graeco-Roman world. There was a whole continent still to be conquered for Christ, a task which, naturally enough, could only be achieved by degrees. Thus, in the sixth and the seventh centuries, Christianity was established in Gaul, Spain, England, and Italy, with conversion of some of the most notable people in Europe—the Franks, the Burgundians, the Suevians, the Visigoths, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Lombards. In the eighth and ninth centuries, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Holland became Christian, with the acceptance of the Christian faith by the Germanic tribes inhabiting these regions. During the same period the Gospel was preached in Denmark and Sweden, and the boundaries of Christendom were further extended with the conversion of the Slavonic peoples—the Croats, the Serbs, the Bulgars, and the Moravians. In the course of the next few centuries, the peoples that had not yet made their submission to Christ were brought over to the Church: the Czechs and the Poles in the tenth century; the Danes, the Norwegians, and the Hungarians in the eleventh; the Swedes and the Wends in the twelfth; the Livonians, the Esthonians, the Courlandais, the Prussians, and the Finns in the thirteenth; and the Lithuanians in the fourteenth. The conversion of these peoples was followed in each case by a systematic process of Christianization of their cultures, resulting in the gradual evolution of a Christian civilization. This was a more delicate and subtle task to the accomplishment of which the very best minds in the Western Church had to dedicate themselves.[1]

[1] Descamps, *Histoire Générale Comparée des Missions*, ch. IV, pp. 141-265.

The circumstance that turned the attention of Rome to the East was the incursion of the Mongols into Christian Europe. Chingiz Khān, *l'Empereur Inflexible*, had welded the Mongol tribes who occupied Central Asia, into a great nation. Under his strong leadership the Mongols soon made themselves masters of northern China and of the empire of Kharezm in Central Asia, and started a series of campaigns in the course of which they overran Iran, Armenia, and the Caucasus. In 1221, they massacred a Russian force that had attempted to impede their advance, and extended their conquests as far as the Dnieper. In 1227, however, Chingiz Khān died, and his immense empire, which had become too unwieldy to be governed by one man, was divided among his progeny. Ogdai ruled in the East, Jagatai in Turkestan, Hūlāgū in Persia, and Batu in Southern Russia. But the division of the empire made no difference to the aggressive policy that the Mongols had hitherto pursued. Under Ogdai, who inherited the title of the Great Khān and exercised a sort of primacy over his colleagues, the conquests were pushed with the same earnestness and energy into southern China and above all into Europe. Moscow and Kiev soon fell into their hands. Hungary was attacked and the troops of Henry of Silesia were beaten at Liegnitz in 1241. At the same time two other Mongol armies traversed the Carpathians and advancing through Transylvania reached the Adriatic. Happily, the death of Ogdai in the nick of time saved Hungary, as five years elapsed before the election of the Grand Khān Kūyūk.[2]

Appalled by the excesses committed by these rude barbarians, Pope Gregory IX had, in 1241, charged the Cistercians, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans to preach a crusade against the Mongols who then threatened to carry all before them in western Europe. But Pope Gregory died that very year, and Innocent IV, who succeeded him during the interval of the inactivity of the Mongols, conceived the bold project of sending missioners to these latter in an attempt to convert these new barbarians to Christianity and take Islam in its flank by allying Christendom with the rising power of the Mongols.[3]

The Pope entrusted the realization of the project to the great religious orders of the times—the Franciscans and the Dominicans,

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 274-75.
[3] *Itid.*

and accordingly two missions were dispatched to the Mongols in 1246, composed respectively of the members of the two religious Orders. Headed by Ascelin or Anselm, the Dominican mission made for the camp of General Baiju to the north-west of Persia. But whatever chance of success the mission may have had was ruined when the envoys bluntly declared that they had been sent by the Pope, "who was greater than all other men," and exhorted the Mongols to desist from their massacres, to repent of their crimes and be converted. Baiju, who had all along been accustomed to see the representatives of the nations cringe before him, felt his dignity wounded by these bold words of the papal envoys; while they added insult to injury in refusing to comply with the court etiquette which prescribed a triple genuflexion on the part of anyone seeking an interview with the General. Baiju was quite beside himself with rage, and thrice condemned them to death, but finally permitted them to depart, accompanied by two of his own envoys bearing an insulting missive to the Pope.[4]

Under the gifted leadership of John of Plano Carpini, the Franciscan mission had fared better. Arriving at the Golden Horde, not far from the Baikal lake, the ambassadors had to await the formal election of Kūyūk as the Grand Khān, before they could be received by him officially. The tenor of the letter which Plano Carpini bore to the Grand Khān was the same as that of the message which the Dominicans had delivered to Baiju. It said that the Mongols had carried desolation into Christian countries, without regard to age or sex, and ended with the exhortation that the Khān and his people should amend their ways and make penance. But the situation was ably handled by the leader of the mission with the result that, in his letter to the Pope, Kūyūk contented himself with merely inviting the Pope and the kings of Europe to his court to do him homage and make their submission.[5]

The papal missions were followed by those sent by St. Louis, the king of France, to explore the possibility of an alliance with the Mongols. From Persia, General Ilchi Khān had sent ambassadors to the French king, announcing the conversion of Kūyūk to Christianity and proposing a mutual alliance against Egypt. The news was too good to be believed. Nevertheless, St. Louis

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 275-76.

[5] *Bullarium Franciscanorum*, vol. I, p. 353, no. 75, quoted in Descamps, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-77.

dispatched as his envoy, in 1248, the Dominican savant André de Longjumeau. But when the envoy arrived at the Golden Horde he found that Kūyūk was already dead. The queen regent who received him treated him as coming from a vassal and gave him a letter to king Louis demanding an annual tribute.

Undeterred by the failure of Longjumeau's mission, Louis sent, five years later, a more celebrated ambassador to the Mongols in the person of William of Rubruck, a Franciscan, who hailed from Rubruc near Cassel (now in French Flanders). In Karakorum, Rubruck found some Catholics at the Golden Horde. He also met Nestorians, Muslims, and Buddhists, and held religious disputations with these sectaries. But he too failed to secure the chief object of his mission. The Grand Khān, Mangū, had not the slightest intention of changing his religion, or of concluding an alliance with Louis.[6]

The missions had for the moment failed to achieve the desired results. But contact had been established with the Mongols, of which the Holy See was not slow to avail herself. It now entrusted to regular missioners the task of implanting Christianity among the Mongols, who, on their part, looking to Christendom for support against common enemies, treated the missioners with favour.

This was specially the case with the Mongols in Persia living under the constant threat of the sultan of Egypt. Thus in 1260 when Hūlāgū, the first Khān of Persia—who had earlier destroyed the Caliphate of Baghdad—suffered a defeat at the hands of the Muslims, he sent an ambassador to the Pope, Alexander IV. The Pope was requested to send him a pious and capable person who could instruct him in the Faith and receive him into the Church. Hūlāgū himself never reached the point of becoming a Christian. But one of his Christian wives exercised a great influence at the court in favour of her co-religionists. Under the influence of his Christian wife, again, Abākā, the successor of Hūlāgū, struck coins, bearing the legend "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." In 1274 he sent an ambassador to Rome and to the Council of Lyons, while three years later two brothers John and James Vassalli, presented themselves at the papal court in his name. Under Arghon (1284-91), who was a contemporary of the missionary Pope, Nicholas IV, a unified effort was made to arrest the advance of Islam in Palestine, though with little success.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

The tentative offer of an alliance with the West against Egypt was again made under Khodaheudah (1316-36), but failed, thanks to the general apathy of the Christian princes.[7]

Naturally enough, the Latin missions throve in this favourable climate. Catholicism made such rapid strides that in 1318 John XXII established the episcopal hierarchy in Persia by his bull, *Redemptor Noster*. A Dominican, Francis of Perugia, was appointed the first archbishop of Sultania, with six suffragans under him. A still more remarkable development of Catholicism in Persia was the institution of the Dominican Order among the Armenians of the Eastern rite. The *Frères-Uniteurs*, as this religious society was called received the approbation of the Pope and was placed under the authority of the Dominicans in 1356. The *Frères-Uniteurs* were specially useful in reconciling to the Catholic Church the separated churches among whom were a number of bishops, and they rendered great service by translating into the Armenian tongue Latin works on history, philosophy, theology, and other kindred subjects.[8]

In other Mongol kingdoms, too, Catholicism made rapid progress. But it is the relations of the Holy See with the Grand Khān Kūblāi that are of greater moment for us from the point of view of the history of Latin Christianity in India. For, lying as it is on the route of the missioners who went out to the court of the Grand Khān at Khān Balik or Peking, India almost immediately drew the attention of these missioners to its own religious needs, and it was not long before missions were started in the country itself.

Tolerant and broad-minded, Kūblāi had attracted to his court at Khān Balik representatives of all the known religions of the world. In 1263 he sent the two Venetians Nicolo and Maffei Polo on a mission to the Pope to send him a hundred Christians learned in the liberal arts and capable of proving to his people the superiority of Christianity. The Polo brothers had repaired to the Court of Kūblāi Khān in the train of an embassy from the Grand Khān which they had chanced upon in Turkestan. Pope Gregory X could afford only two Friars-Preachers. The latter, however, were not able to sustain the trials of the long journey. Accordingly, the two Polos, who had now taken with them Marco, the son of the one and nephew of the other, and who later became

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 279-81.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 281 ; *Bullarium Franciscanorum*, vol. V, pp. 148-49, no. 318.

celebrated, thanks to his famous book of travel, returned to Peking without the Friars-Preachers.[9] And a number of years were to elapse before a Catholic missioner could reach the Mongol capital.

John of Monte Corvino

The first Catholic missioner to go to the court of the Grand Khān at Khān Balik was a Franciscan, John of Monte Corvino. Appointed papal legate, he started for his destination in 1291, accompanied by the Dominican Nicolas of Pistoia.[10] The missioners could take any of the well-worn routes to China. They could follow the road that went north, rounding the Caspian, and cut cross Dzungaria and the desert of Chamo. On covering three-quarters of the distance, they could be at Karakorum, the old capital. There was also the old route through Turkestan which gave access to China through the northern frontier of Tibet. These were in fact the two great arteries of trade, which had transformed Central Asia into a gigantic clearing-house for almost all kinds of merchandise. All the races of the Orient, Chinese and Indian, Arab and Mongol, could be met in the bazaars of Samarkhand, Kabul, and Herat.[11] This area would soon be covered by mission stations. But at the time we are speaking of, there were only two stations where our missioners could find rest and repose—Tabriz in Armenia to the west and Ili-Balik in the mountains of Tien-Shan, to the east. But despite these places of retreat, the road was excessively difficult for poor wayfarers like the friars travelling with only a modicum of comfort. In the first place, in taking this route, they ran the great risk of losing their lives on being discovered who they were. For if the emperor of the Mongols favoured the Christians, they had at all times to reckon with the hostility of the Muslims. And in fact, more than one missioner had died martyr on these long roads of Central Asia in the vain attempt to gain China. Then again, the journey along these routes was frightfully long. The two Polos had taken three years to go from Peking to Saint John Acre. It was bound to be longer in the case of ordinary people. The countries through which the roads passed were frequently at war. The travellers were hard put to it to find a caravan strong enough to push its

[9] Huc, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-72.
[10] Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. I, p. 197.
[11] Lavisse et Rambaud, *Histoire Générale*, vol. II, p. 888 ; vol. III, p. 930.

way through these hostile tracts without anyone daring to dispute its passage. And it took time to assemble the caravans. Finally, there were the rivers in spate to be crossed, a very difficult matter, and the avalanches, which threatened to crush to death the unwary traveller, not to speak of the other inconveniences consequent on the inclemencies of the weather.[12]

A practical man of affairs, John of Monte Corvino, therefore, chose the third route which led to China through India. It was the sea-route, which was used by the Arab merchants, in addition to the caravan routes through Central Asia. Embarking at Hormuz, they made for one of the ports on the west coast of India, then studded with Arab colonies. They then doubled Cape Comorin and crossed the Bay of Bengal, and skirting Malaya and Indo-China, made for Canton where they had their richest entrepôt.[13]

John of Monte Corvino was very probably the first European to follow this route to China. As an explorer of the new route for the use of the missioners who were to follow him, he made his observations on the difficulties of the voyage. He thought that all considered, the sea-route was in no way easier than the land routes. The difference was only in the nature of the perils run; for in the place of the wars and tempests the China seas were infested with pirates and struck by typhoons. The time taken for the voyage was more or less the same. Marco Polo, who left China a little after the arrival of Monte Corvino took three and a half years to reach Europe. He had at his disposal the Chinese junks of the Grand Khān, with their four masts flying twelve sails,[14] while the missioner had to brave the seas in the primitive single-masted *dhows* of the Arabs. He said of the Arab vessels:

> Their ships in these parts are mighty frail and uncouth, with no iron in them, and no caulking. They are sewn like clothes with twine. And so if the twine breaks anywhere there is a breach indeed. Once every year, therefore, there is a mending of this, more or less, if they propose to go to sea. And they have a frail and flimsy rudder like the top of a table, of a cubit in width,

[12] Huc, *op. cit.*, pp. 377-78; Brou, "L'Evangélisation de L'Inde au Moyen Age," *Etudes*, vol. LXXXVII, pp. 584-85.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 585.

[14] Huc, *op. cit.*, pp. 374-75; Brou, *art. cit.*, pp. 586-87; Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, vol. VI, p. 70.

in the middle of the stern ; and when they have to tack, it is done with a vast deal of trouble ; and if it is blowing in any way hard, they cannot tack at all. They have but one sail and one mast, and the sails are either of matting or some miserable cloth. The ropes are of husk. Moreover, their marines are few and far from good. Hence they run a multitude of risks insomuch that they are wont to say, when any ship achieves her voyage safely and soundly, that 'tis by God's guidance, and man's skill hath little availed.[15]

Arriving in India, the two missioners landed at Mylapore, the city hallowed by the martyrdom of St. Thomas, where, for some reason, their departure for China was delayed by thirteen months. Mylapore was almost equidistant from Tabriz, then ranking as a sort of headquarters, and China, and it was at Mylapore that the route between Malaya and the Sunda isles bifurcated. John of Monte Corvino, therefore, decided to make Mylapore a midway station—a halting-place for the missioners on their long voyage to China, hoping to develop it into a centre of a new apostolate in due course.[16]

He applied himself to the task almost immediately. He went about the country, studying the character of the people, in order to see if the religion of Christ had any chance of being accepted by them. He was, however, handicapped by lack of equipment for such a study. It is not worth discussing his hasty impressions of the moral character of the Hindus: idolatrous without moral law or letters or books.[17] Evidently, John had no dealings with the intellectual classes of Hindu society. Nor did he have any idea of the rich literature of the Tamils among whom he spent his thirteen months in India. As he says: "They have indeed an alphabet which they use to keep their accounts, and to write prayers or charms for their idols!" But he correctly noted the individual character of Hindu worship: "They have idol houses in which they worship at almost all hours of the day ; for they never join together to worship at any fixed hour, but each goes to worship when it pleases himself." He was also accurate in his observations about the institution of marriage that "when the husband

[15] Yule, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-18.
[16] Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 586.
[17] Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

dies, the wife cannot marry again." And describing the disposal of the dead, he wrote truly: "They bury not their dead but burn them, carrying them to the pile with music and singing; whilst apart from this occasion, the relatives of the deceased manifest great grief and affliction like other folk."[18] It was perhaps well that the gruesome practice of *Sati* somehow escaped his attention.

But apart from the unflattering picture he drew of the Indian character, John of Monte Corvino was impressed by the simplicity and the friendly disposition of our people.[19] He had also been impressed by the security and peace reigning in the country[20] —a *sine qua non* for the success of the apostolate at all times. In different places round about Mylapore, he himself had baptized a hundred persons.[21] Encouraged by his success he decided to leave behind him at this place his Dominican companion-in-arms—Friar Nicolas of Pistoia—to continue his work.

At the nick of time, however, when John of Monte Corvino was about to set sail, happy in the thought of bright prospects for the mission he had founded at Mylapore, Friar Nicolas fell ill and died.[22] And it must have been with a heavy heart that Monte Corvino took leave of his neophytes (1292). The fact was that he could not side-track the chief object of the mission on which the Holy See was sending him. The instructions he had received from the Pope were specific. They were to the effect that he should establish the Church in China.

We do not know what became of this little congregation which had sprung up as a result of the few months' labour on the part of the Latin monks. A little later Marco Polo touched Mylapore on his way to Europe. He saw the Christians there. But one wonders if he could distinguish the Catholics from the other Christians that gathered at the tomb of the Saint. He merely speaks of St. Thomas and his sanctuary, of the veneration which even the Muslims themselves had for him, and the cures wrought by the mud from his tomb which the patients took, mixed in water.[23]

Arriving in China, Monte Corvino worked single-handed for twelve years. His apostolate was blessed with success, despite

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15. [19] *Ibid.*, p. 215. [20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 208. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 197.
[23] Yule, ed., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, vol. II, chap. 17, p. 356 n.

the obstacles put on his way by the Nestorians. The Holy See made him Archbishop at Khān Balik (Peking) with patriarchal authority and sent seven suffragan bishops and friars of his Order to work under him. Of these bishops, however, five died on the way, and the two that joined him, divided with him the 30,000 faithful that he had gathered unto Christ (1308).[24]

But in the midst of his labours in China, he did not forget his Christians in Mylapore, whom he had left to the care of Divine Providence. In 1306, he appealed to his fellow-monks in Persia to go and minister in the mission field he had opened in India. He wrote: "I have seen the greater part of India and made inquiries about the rest, and can say that it would be most profitable to preach to them the Faith of Christ, if the brethren would but come."[25] But Rome had fixed her eyes on China, where the Church was going from strength to strength under the immediate patronage of the Khān, and for the moment could not spare the personnel needed for the efficient working of the Indian mission. It was thus left to Friar-Preacher Jordan of Sévérac, who followed Monte Corvino, to establish the Catholic Church in India.

Jordan of Sévérac

Jordan of Sévérac was a Frenchman who was born at Sévérac-le-Chateau in the district of Rouergue in the department of Aveyron, some ninety miles to the north-east of Toulouse. In his famous book entitled *Mirabilia Descripta*, he describes himself as *oriundum de Severaco, in India majori Episcopum Columbensen*, i.e., hailing from Sévérac, Bishop of Quilon in the Great Indies.[26]

Brother Jordan had worked for several years in the Middle East

[24] Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. I, p. CXXXII; Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 589.

[25] Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[26] Coquebert-Montbret, *Recueil de Voyages et de Memoires Publié par la Société de Geographie*, vol. IV, p. 4. *The Wonders of the East*, tr. Yule, p. IV. Yule had dropped the words "oriundum de Severaco" from the title-page of his English translation, which is based on the French of Coquebert-Montbret. But Yule maintains that Jordan was "a native of Sévérac," and further adds: "That he was a Frenchman will appear from several passages in his book." We cite here only two instances: first, when Jordan wishes to give an idea of the cities of India, nothing better occurs to him than to compare them to the city of Toulouse (Yule, p. 47); elsewhere we read the following remark: "J'estime que le roi de France pourrait par lui-méme, et sans

where he resided in the monastery of his Order at Tabriz. Like his fellow-monks in this monastery, he belonged to the small Congregation founded by the Order of Friars-Preachers at the beginning of the fourteenth century—that of *Societates peregrinantium pro Christo*, with the special object of working for the conversion of the eastern peoples.[27] In 1318 Pope John XXII definitely divided the mission territory in the East between the Franciscans and the Dominicans, the members of which Orders had been hitherto toiling side by side in the common task of the evangelization of the Orient. And it was thus that while the whole of the Far East was made over to the Franciscans, the Dominicans were entrusted with the missions in the Middle East, which included the whole of West Asia, the Indies and Turkestan as far as Arabia and Ethiopia.[28] Jordan, who was burning with zeal for the conversion of the peoples in these territories, may have read the appeal of Monte Corvino, which this saintly missioner had addressed to the monks in Persia, to go out to India to work among his converts. From China Monte Corvino may also have renewed his appeal through monks of his Order passing through Persia on their way to Europe from time to time. Further, India was now part of the territory assigned to the Friars-Preachers, a country where, at the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore, one of his confrères had ended his life. Jordan therefore decided to leave for India at the earliest opportunity.

This opportunity offered itself in the autumn of 1320 when there arrived at Tabriz four Friars-Minor—Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, both priests, Peter of Sienna and Demetrius of Tiflis, a Georgian convert skilled in languages—bound for China. Thomas, the leader of this mission band, was a veteran missioner. In 1290 he had been sent by the General of his Order on a mission to the king of Armenia, who had invited the Franciscans. Two years later this king sent him to the kings of France and England to entreat their help against the Muslims, who were menacing his frontiers. Returning to Armenia to give an account of his embassy,

aucune concours, subjuguer et convertir à la foi chrétienne le monde entier" (*Ibid.*, p. 56). Cf. Balme, "Un Missionnaire Dominicaine en Orient au Quatorze Siècle," *L'Année Dominicaine*, vol. XXV, pp. 8-9 ; Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 590.

[27] Balme, *art. cit.*, p. 7 ; Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 584 ; Huc, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-73.

[28] Fontana, *Monumenta Dominicana, ad annum* 1316, cited in Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 589.

he again started for Europe in 1302 to obtain leave from his superiors to depart for the Far East with some other members of his Order. In 1307 he once again went to Europe taking with him this time the letters of John of Monte Corvino to Pope Clement V,[29] a mission which led to the establishment of the episcopal hierarchy in China and the appointment of this intrepid missioner as Archbishop of Khān Balik. Jordan offered to fill the place left vacant by the death of Nicolas of Pistoia at Mylapore, and asked and received from the Vicar-General of the Congregation permission to depart to India with these Franciscan friars, going to China by the sea-route.

Towards the end of 1320 the party left Tabriz for Hormuz, where two months later they embarked with a view to proceed to Quilon on the Malabar coast. But instead of sailing to the latter place direct, the vessel wended its course to Thana (near Bombay),[30] which had then taken the place of Kalyan as the principal port on this part of the west coast. At this time Thana was in the hands of the Muslims belonging to the Delhi Sultanate, though the population was predominantly Hindu. There was besides a small community of Nestorians, evidently descended from the early Christians described by Cosmas, now reduced to a mere handful of fifteen families. There were also a few European merchants living amongst the heterogeneous population of the town. It was with one of the Nestorian families that the friars found ready welcome.[31]

The news of the arrival of the monks from the West rapidly spread among the Christians and non-Christians alike. And soon Jordan, who knew Persian, was invited to Broach in Gujarat two hundred and fifty kilometres from Thana. There were waiting for him a number of Christians wishing to be instructed and baptized.[32] Jordan had no difficulty in accepting the invitation. For, having arrived at Thana in April, they could resume their voyage to Malabar and Mylapore only in October at the end of the monsoon, which would burst any time in May, making it impossible for ships to sail during the rainy weather. The friars were only

[29] Aprilis, *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. I, pp. 51-52. Cf. Balme, *art. cit.*, p. 60.

[30] Wadding says that it was against their will that they were landed in Thana, after a voyage of three months from Tabriz. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, vol. VI, p. 354.

[31] Yule, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 60 ; Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 590.

[32] Wadding, *loc. cit.*

too glad to have an occasion like the present to put their forced sojourn in Thana to good use in the service of the fellow-Christians of the locality.

With two Nestorian interpreters to help him, Jordan first went to Sopara, which lay on his route. Here was a Church with a Christian community.[33] He instructed these Christians in religious doctrine, baptized about ninety persons, and administered to them the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist during the fifteen days he stayed with them. He then engaged a boat in order to go to Broach. But as he was about to embark, the ship was sunk although there was not the slightest agitation of the waves. Struck by this extraordinary phenomenon, Jordan took it as a sign that it was the Divine will that he should not leave his companions alone. He disembarked and sent his two interpreters to Thana to inquire after the friars, while he himself retired to the Church to pray.[34] This was on April 10, 1321, but the next night he was suddenly awakened by the Christians who advised him to flee and informed him of the arrest of his companions. Jordan scorned the thought of leaving his companions to their fate and started forthwith for Thana, in full speed, hoping that with his better knowledge of Persian he could plead the cause of the friars before the Mallik or Governor better.[35]

[33] It was the mistaken belief among these Christians that this Church was built by St. Thomas—a proof that they had by now long forgotten the conversion of their forefathers by St. Bartholomew. This seems to have been due to the fact that their minds were disabused of the belief in the apostolate of the saint in these parts by the Persian clergy, who, according to Cosmas, ministered to them. This clergy presumably could not reconcile the apostolate of St. Bartholomew here with his undoubted mission and martyrdom, according to Friar William of Rubruck, in South Armenia, near a place called Nakichavan, not far from Tabriz. (Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, p. 213.) It seemed absurd indeed for this clergy, accustomed to associate St. Bartholomew with Armenia, to even think of the possibility of his apostolate elsewhere, and least of all in distant India, in preference to so near a place to Jerusalem as Armenia—where, indeed, it is a matter of historical fact, he was actually martyred. The Church at Sopara was of the invocation of St. Thomas, and it is clear that since Kalyan is not mentioned in the itinerary of Jordan, the once flourishing Christian community of Kalyan, spoken of by Cosmas, had by then disappeared.

[34] Brou, *art cit.*, p. 591 ; Quetif-Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, vol. I, pp. 550-51.

[35] Moule, "Brother Jordan of Sévérac," *JRAS*, 1928, p. 363.

This is the Passion of the Holy Brothers-Minor compiled from the letters

In Thana he found that the Christians had gone into hiding, frightened by what had befallen the friars. They told him that during his absence three of the Franciscans had been summoned before the Qadi (judge) as witnesses in a case filed by the mistress of the house, where they were guests, against her brutal husband for physical injury following assault. When the case was being called, it had occurred to a certain man from Alexandria, named Osep (Joseph), to suggest to the Qadi that he should avail himself of the presence of these learned men from the West, to arrange a religious disputation with them. Accordingly, the Mallik had them summoned before him and asked them whence they had come and whither they were bound, to which they replied that they were Christian Latins and that they had undertaken such a journey as pilgrims for Christ. He was satisfied with their reply and permitted them to take their leave, but again summoned them on the representation of the Alexandrian Muslim to the effect that they were enemies of the Saracens. This time he inquired more carefully about the Faith and the state of the Franks, but finding nothing incriminating, he let them go. After some days, the Alexandrian again came to their lodging in person and compelled them to present themselves before the Mallik, taking the Bible with them. The Mallik was greatly attracted by the beauty of the book and wanted to know its contents. When he was given the explanation that his question demanded, he began to expatiate on the greatness and the divine origin of the Koran. The friars contented themselves with the reply that their religion was good, and requested his permission to depart, saying: "We are poor Christians, and in this life we possess nothing, and we have arranged to go elsewhere." The Mallik acceded to their request but, at the instigation of the Alexandrian Muslim, they were summoned by the Qadi, who challenged them to dispute with him the truth of his statements, especially his denial of the Blessed Trinity and that Christ was God.

Friar Thomas defended himself with consummate skill when the Qadi, who was eager to corner him, asked him point blank what he thought of Muhammad. Given the uncompromising spirit of the age, the answer could not be in doubt. Driven to bay, Friar Thomas replied: "Mohamet is the son of perdition, and is

of Brothers Jordan and Francis, Preachers, and Odoric, Peter, James, Hugolin, Minors.

in hell with the devil, and all who hold this false and profane law are damned." This was indeed unfortunately not only tactless but also poor apologetics, which prevented the good friar from allowing Muhammad his due mead of praise for his supreme achievement in leading a people so deeply sunk in idolatry and superstition, as were the Arabs, to the knowledge of the one, true God. The harsh words of the friar roused the indignation of the crowd of believers. They immediately stripped the friars, and anointing their naked bodies they made them stand in the blazing sun for three hours, a punishment from which one rarely escaped alive. But it had no effect on the monks who escaped from it unscathed and cheerful.[36]

The Qadi thereupon decided that the friars should be made to pass through fire in proof of the truth of what they taught. The monks protested against the suggestion vigorously: they would gladly accept torture as witness to Christ, but they refused to tempt heaven. "If the fire consume us," they declared, "think not this cometh from (the fault of) our religion, but only from our sins."[37] When the fire was kindled Friar Thomas of Tolentino was the first to cast himself into it; but as he did so, one of the Muslims pulled him by the hood, saying: "Nay, thou shall not go for thou art old, and mayest have upon thee some crafty device whereby the fire could not burn thee, so let another than thou go in!" They then pushed Friar James of Padua. He disappeared in the midst of the flames, and the crowd which had gathered to witness the spectacle, could hear only his invocation to the Blessed Virgin. But when the flames abated they saw him standing on the embers, unhurt and making the sign of the cross with his hands raised to heaven.

"They are saints, they are saints! 'tis sin to do them hurt," shouted the crowd.

"He is no saint! he is no saint!" replied the Qadi, "but the reason why he is not burnt is that he hath on his back a garment from the land of Abraham." The fire was rekindled, and the friar who had been stripped and copiously anointed with oil was thrust into the burning pit. But a second time he emerged from it safe and sound.[38]

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 364-65.

[37] Yule, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63. The account of Odoric is reproduced in *Acta Sanctorum*, pp. 50-54.

[38] Yule, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

It was now evidently impolitic to do any hurt to the friars, as the crowd had definitely gone over to their side. And so fearing disturbance, the Qotwāl, or inspector whose duty was to maintain order, had the monks conveyed across the arm of the sea[39] that separates Thana from the mainland so that they might be safe from the clutches of the Qadi. But the Qadi convinced the Qotwāl that the interests of Islam would suffer if the friars were allowed to go alive. For the miraculous circumstance under which they had escaped death would greatly assist in the propaganda of the Christian religion to the detriment of Islam. The Qotwāl then caused all the Christians in the city to be seized, and made a thorough search for the fugitive friars. They were discovered at the dead of night when they had risen to say their matins, and were taken to a tree outside the town.[40] Before decapitating them, however, the executioners prayed their forgiveness saying :

> You must know we have orders from the Qadi and the Melic (Qotwāl) to slay you ; and we are reluctant to do it, for ye are good and holy men. But we can do no otherwise. For if we do not their behest we and all our children and our wives shall die !

To which the monks answered : "Since you come hither that we through death temporal may attain the life eternal, do that which ye are bidden. For we are ready to bear manfully whatever tortures ye may inflict on us for our religion and for the love of Jesus Christ Our Lord."[41]

The next morning they found Friar Peter of Sienna, who had been absent during the trials and sufferings of his confrères. They tried to make him confess the name of Muhammad, but to no purpose. They then left him hanging from a tree for a full day, and when night came and he was found still alive, they cut him in two. And there was no trace of him the next day.[42]

Aided by a young Genoese who happened to be in Thana, Jordan had the bodies of these martyrs conveyed to Sopara, where he

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65 ; Moule, *art. cit.*, pp. 366-67.
[40] Yule, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.
[42] *Ibid.*

buried them in the church of St. Thomas.[43] Some time later these relics were taken by Friar Odoric to Zaytun in China, where the Friars-Minor had two monasteries, and from there they were transferred to Europe by way of Tibet.[44]

After the martyrdom of the friars, Jordan remained with the Christians at Thana. He could now move about freely. For when the news of the cruel death of the friars reached Delhi, the sultan summoned the Qotwāl to his presence, and had him put to death; while the Qadi, on hearing of the fate of his colleague, fled from the city and from the dominions of the emperor.[45] Jordan was successful in his ministry. During six months he baptized a hundred and fifteen persons in Broach alone, and thirty-five between Thana and Sopara. He now wrote to the headquarters in Persia for more workers to reap the rich harvest that he was expecting. In particular, he desired to station missioners at three places: Sopara, Broach, and Quilon.[46]

He himself wanted to go to Ethiopia, to open up a new mission in this territory, which had been made over to the Friars-Preachers under the arrangements of 1318. As he wrote in his letter of October 1321:

> I have been told by our Latin merchants that the way to Ethiopia is open for anyone who wishes to go and preach there, where once St. Matthew the Evangelist did preach. I pray the Lord that I may not die until I have been a pilgrim for the Faith unto those regions, for this is my whole heart's desire.[47]

[43] Quetif-Echard, *op. cit.*, p. 551; Balme, *art. cit.*, pp. 69-70; Wadding, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

[44] Balme, *art. cit.*, p. 218; Wadding, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

Yule adds: "It does not appear to be clear that those four friars ever received the official beatification of Rome, though they appear as Beati in the *Acta Sanctorum*. The Order applied to John XXII to have this done, and he intimated approval; but schism and controversies arising in the Order about this time, the matter was lost sight of." According to one author, however, quoted by Wadding, but apparently without much confidence, the beatification was sanctioned by John's successor, and the feast ordered to be celebrated on the Wednesday of Holy Week. This, however, was done by Pope Leo XIII in 1894, the feast being observed on April 9. Cf. Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 595; *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg, Herder, 1938), p. 133.

[45] Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 227

But Jordan waited in vain. For the Vicar-General of the Order in Persia, Friar Nicolas of Rome, who had himself started for India in the beginning of the year 1322, on receipt of the letter of Jordan, never reached the Indian shores. He very probably succumbed to the hardships of the voyage.[48]

In the meanwhile persecution had broken anew and things had gone hard with the missioner. As he wrote in his pathetic letter of January 1324:

> To whom shall I speak of my sufferings? The pirates have seized me on the high seas; the Muslims have cast me into prison. I was accused, and was hurt, and was maligned. And behold it is a long time since, like a criminal, I have been prohibited from wearing the habit of my Order. I have endured hunger and thirst, heat and cold, wrath and curses, illness and destitution, accusations by false brethren; inclemencies of the seasons, and other evils still worse. I suffered more than what I can describe. And during these times those who had been associated with me in the work already gained their palm of victory. I may add that I am in extreme distress and that I suffer savagely in every limb of my body. My head, my chest, all the organs, and all my limbs have their infirmities. To these miseries of body and soul is joined my loneliness. I have nobody here to whom I could go for advice. In fine, I have been a source of dissension among the people. I have joyful days, and I have unhappy days according as the intriguers fail or not in their machinations.[49]

But amidst all these trials and sufferings, he had baptized during the fifteen months since he wrote his first letter, one hundred and thirty persons. He was confident that more would follow, if only there could be workers to gather in the harvest. And he wrote:

> I am sure if the friars come here ready to suffer everything with patience, including the death of a martyr, they will be able to

[48] Quetif-Echard, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 549-50. Cf. Balme, *art. cit.*, p. 221; Brou, *art.; cit.*, p. 595.

[49] Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, vol. VI, ad. Ann. 1321; Quetif-Echard, *op. cit.*, p. 584; Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

achieve great good. Be it known to you beloved friars, that your name of Latins is held in the highest honour by the Indians. They never cease to hope to see if someone of ours will come to them, even if they so hope only in passing. They say that their books predict this happy day, and they pray without ceasing that it may please God to quicken it.[50]

This time five Dominicans responded to the touching appeal of Friar Jordan, and they were dispersed among various mission stations in Kanara, Mysore, Malabar, and Travancore.[51] The conversions increased. Jordan himself says that before he left for Europe in 1328, they had reached the high total of ten thousand, adding, "because we, being few in number, could not occupy, or even visit, many parts of the land, many souls (woe is me) have perished."[52] But persecution was always on their track. In 1326 Andrew of Perugia, a missioner in China, speaks of a massacre in South India of the missioners Nicholas of Banterra, Andrutius of Assissi and of a bishop.[53] Jordan himself remarks in his *Mirabilia Descripta*, that in his time, five Friars-Preachers and four Friars-Minor were cruelly done to death for the Catholic Faith.[54] It was thus that with their blood and sweat, the sons of St. Dominic brought the Catholic Faith to India at the beginning of the fourteenth century, while the Friars-Minor were establishing the Church in China.[55] About the quality of these Christians, which their efforts had produced, Friar Jordan wrote :

> There is no better land or fairer, nor people so honest, no victuals so good and savoury, dress so handsome, or manners so noble, as here in our own Christendom ; and, above all, we have the true faith, though ill it be kept. For, as God is my witness, ten times better (Christians), and more charitable withal, be those who be converted by the Preaching and Minor Friars to our faith, than our own folk here, as experience has taught me.[56]

[50] Wadding, *loc. cit.* ; Quetif-Echard, *loc. cit.* ; Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 230 ; Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 597.

[51] Wadding, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 63.

[52] *Mirabilia Descripta*, pp. 55-56.

[53] Wadding, *loc. cit.*; Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 225 ; Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 598.

[54] *Mirabilia Descripta*, p. 56.

[55] Balme, *art. cit.*, pp. 223-24.

[56] *Mirabilia Descripta*, p. 55.

Bishop Jordan took his pallium to his metropolitan, the Archbishop of Sultania, John of Cor.[60] He carried papal letters among others to the kings of Delhi,[61] and Quilon,[62] and one also to the chief of the Nestorians of Malabar.[63] In his letters to the princes, the Pope thanked them for the protection which they had accorded the Friars-Preachers, and requested them to continue their favours to them and in particular, to the venerable "Friar Jordan, Bishop of Coulan, and, other bishops of the same Order whom he sends to these regions."[64]

It is, however, the letter to the Christians of Molephatam (Mylapore), here styled Nascarini,[65] that is of greater interest, reviving as it does, the memory of the ancient Christianity of South India. In this letter the Pope said :

> With ardent zeal do we desire and with extreme yearnings do we long that all men, redeemed by the precious blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, be illumined by the rays of heavenly grace, and that salvation, object of our wishes, be granted to souls, so that, eluding the wickedness of the old enemy ever seeking to do hurt, they may in the suavity of overflowing sweetness enjoy the glory of that heavenly bliss which man's intelligence cannot comprehend and which our Saviour promises to them that love Him.
>
> What we consider even more deeply with constant care, what we thirst for more vehemently, what we beg with fervent prayers in the ardour of solid charity, is that among all those whom the water of baptism has regenerated the division of schism may cease, the clouds of errors may not darken the brightness of faith, and the imitation of a detestable sundering and the falsity of a sullied faith may not blind the mental eyes of such as believe in Christ and worship His name, but that, in oneness of orthodox faith, under one shepherd, and in the solid and untainted union of one flock, the one, holy, catholic, and universal Roman Church, not divided by any rent of schisms, may happily prosper and

[60] Mercati, *Monumenta Vaticana*, pp. 25-26.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.
[65] The Nazranis, as the Christians of St. Thomas were called.

fruitfully succeed in the quest of that same glorious bliss.
Therefore, we earnestly ask, advise, and exhort you all in the same Lord Jesus Christ, beseeching you by the shedding of His precious blood, that our venerable brother Jordan Cathalani, Bishop of Columbum, a member of the Order of Preachers, whom lately we judged to be worthy of being promoted by the apostolic authority to the supreme dignity of bishop, and whom we thought of sending in person to your parts, there to be, as we hope, useful and successful in garnering into the Lord's barns the harvest of the nations of those parts, as also our beloved sons the Friars of the Orders of Preachers and of Minors, who live in the said parts or come thither, be regarded by you, out of reverence for the Apostolic See and for us, as specially commended, considering how the Bishops and Friars aforesaid come to your parts, not without great toils, crossing such long distances of sea and land, solely to collaborate with the work of God. Receiving them kindly and treating them with charity, turn more devoutly the ears of your intelligence to the sacred instructions which they will give you in the doctrine of the Catholic faith, and, driving away the errors of all schisms, conform your minds in all things to the one Catholic faith and to the authority of the Holy Fathers, as it will be of immense and greatest profit to the whole flock of the faithful that everywhere, among all the faithful rejoicing in the Christian name, one God, one faith, one baptism be held, the whole world professing with one heart the same belief.
Moreover, we return to you thanks for the services of great hospitality and pious charity which you have rendered to the same hitherto, receiving them in your hospices, treating them kindly and providing them with the necessary, and we beg the Rewarder of all good things that He for whose sake you receive the ministers of His word, may illumine your minds with the light of truth, and, in return for the temporal favours you do them, reward you with the joys of eternal happiness.[66]

Before setting out on his mission the new Bishop went to Toulouse where a General Chapter of the Order had met in 1328 at the request of the indefatigable Pontiff John XXII, and at

[66] *Bull. del'Ordre*, vol. II, p. 191, cited by Balme, *art. cit.*, p. 300-01; English translation by Hosten, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-21.

which a hundred friars had offered themselves for mission work among non-Christians.[67] He enlisted a large number of these friars for his mission and, accompanied by Brother Télaimonot, he returned to India.[68] He founded several houses of his Order in this country,[69] and converted many people to the Catholic Faith. The Muslims could not bear to see these conversions, and so they stoned him to death at Thana, we do not know in what year.[70]

End of the Mission

After the martyrdom of the Blessed Jordan, the Catholic missions languished in India. At this time great energy was displayed by Islam in proselytizing India and the Far East. As Jordan himself wrote concerning this activity in his *Mirabilia Descripta*:

> And 'tis grief and pain to hear how, through the preachers of the perfidious and accursed Saracens, those sects of the heathen be day by day perverted. For their preachers run about, just as we do, here, there, and everywhere over the whole Orient, in order to turn all to their own miscreance. These be they who accuse us, who smite us, who cause us to be cast into durance,

[67] Fontana, *Mon. Dom.*, 1330, 1336.

[68] Pièrre Bargeron, *Traité des Tartares*, Paris (1634), p. 117.

[69] Wadding, *Annal.*, 1325, no. 14.

[70] André-Marie, *Missions Domincaenes dans L'Extreme Orient*, pp. 41-43. The author says that this account was given to Pope John XXII by Friar Francis of Camerino and Friar Richard of England. Fr. Luis Cacegas in his *Historia de S. Domingos* relates that in 1564 when the foundations were being dug for a building in Thana the workmen came across a statue dressed as a Dominican monk. On inquiries being made from the oldest inhabitants of the town, they said that they had seen the statue in their childhood, and the tradition associated with it was that "two cacizes from Franquia (this is the name they gave to the Christian priests), coming to that place when it was a noble city, and one of them doing wonders which surpassed the power of nature, by giving sight to the blind, feet and hands to the lame and the maimed, and even restoring the dead to life, the king of the city ordered them to be killed; and the people, grieved at the cruelty and thankful for the favour, caused the statue to be carved, to the life, in memory of the dead, and showing their manner of walking and dressing. And they had not been satisfied with less than placing it among their idols in the Pagode." The statue was supposed by the Portuguese, who got this tradition from the local inhabitants, to be that of Jordan. For the martyrdom of Jordan, Fr. Cacegas quotes the authority of *Chron. de S. Francisco*, pt. 2, liv. 7, cap. 35. Hosten, *op. cit.*, pp. 385-86; *Documentacão*, vol. VII, pp. 369-70.

> and who stone us; as I indeed have experienced, having been four times cast into prison by them, I mean the Saracens. But how many times I have had my hair plucked out, and been scourged, and been stoned, God himself knoweth, and I, who had to bear all this for my sins.[71]

With the support of the State behind it, Islam was bound to win in this struggle. The Christian missioner was so helpless that Jordan wished that the Pope could establish a couple of gallies to give chase in these seas, to the ships of the sultan of Alexandria.[72] He also wished that the king of France had subdued the whole world to make it safe for the preaching of the Word of God.[73] But the times were not yet ripe for such an enterprise. This glory was reserved for the heroic Portuguese nation. And in the meanwhile the missions to which the messengers of Christ from Europe came, only to give their lives for the Faith, were ruined when the flow of these messengers ceased.

The first blow to the missions was dealt in China. When in 1368 a revolution overthrew the power of the Mongols, replacing it by the Ming dynasty, the Church, too, disappeared from China along with its protectors. From 1308 to 1368 Peking had her resident bishops. But from 1370 to 1483 there were only the titulars, who, in their turn, had few successors. When, in 1601, the Jesuit Matthew Ricci went to reside at the capital of China, there was no trace left of the former missions.[74]

After China came the turn of Tartary, Persia and India. In the 15th century the whole of West Asia fell under the power of the Turks, and the route to the Far East was closed to the missioners. The flourishing missions of both the Franciscans and the Dominicans were ruined, and when, in the 16th century, the Church returned to the charge, even the ruins themselves had all but disappeared.[75]

This destruction of the missions by external enemies coincided with loss of vitality in the Western Church, consequent on the outbreak in Europe of the Black Death and the Great Schism. Both these events combined to enfeeble the religious zeal, and

[71] *Mirabilia Descripta*, p. 56.
[72] Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 230. Letter dated 1323.
[73] *Mirabilia Descripta, loc. cit.*
[74] Brou, *art. cit.*, pp. 603-04.
[75] *Ibid.*

the renovation of this spirit had to await the discovery, in the 16th century, of the sea-route to India by the Portuguese. The Christian missioners, who had despaired of forcing the barrier to their apostolic conquests opposed by Islam, now found a means of turning its flank, and entered India from the south.[76]

During this dark period, India was visited by John de Marignolli, a Franciscan. The Pope had sent him to China to deliver a message to the Grand Khān, and Marignolli must have left China sometime in 1346 or 1347, and a few months later he arrived in Quilon, where he stayed for sixteen months.[77] Quilon was the centre of the Catholic missions in India and a busy port, where the whole of the pepper trade was concentrated. It was, moreover, the episcopal See, of which the first incumbent was Jordan of Sévérac. There was a Latin Church dedicated to St. George,[78] but at the time of Marignolli's visit, it was apparently without a priest in charge. The Christians were rich enough with their chiefs, called *modilial*, i.e., *mudaliar* or headman, who owned the pepper plantations.[79] The Christians of St. Thomas, in particular, were the masters of the public steel-yard, from the income of which they generously granted Marignolli "as a perquisite of his office as Pope's delegate, every month a hundred gold fans," and a thousand when he left.[80] Marignolli adds that the Jews, Muslims, and even some of the Christians, regarded the Latins as the worst of idolaters, because they used statues in their churches.[81]

Marignolli relates a curious story of a Hindu priest, "a man of majestic stature and snowy white beard," who one day came to him when he happened to be in front of the church. The old man prostrated himself, kissing the ground three times, and told the friar that he had come from a far-off island. He had never eaten meat all his life, and had habitually fasted four months in the year. He was the only priest in his island. The idol which he worshipped told him one day: "Thou art not on the path of salvation. God therefore enjoineth thee to proceed to Columbum

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 604-05.
[77] Yule, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 321.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 344.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 381.
[80] *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 217.
[81] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 388.

a distance of 2 years' voyage by sea, and there shalt thou find the messenger of God who shall teach thee the way to salvation." The man, therefore, had straightaway come to Quilon, and had now recognized in the face of the friar the face of the heavenly envoy which had been revealed to him in his dreams. Sometime before the pirates had taken away his son. The latter, whom they sold to a Genoese merchant, had since been baptized; and it now so chanced that the boy was with the friar on the occasion and the father and the son recognized each other. The son then acted as interpreter to the father in teaching him the articles of the Faith, and after three months' instruction he was baptized under the name of Michael. The old man then went away with his son, promising to teach the Faith he had received to his countrymen.[82]

During his stay at Quilon, Marignolli paid a visit to the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore, eight to nine hundred kilometers from Quilon. He stayed there for four days, collecting all the legends then current at the place.[83]

This Franciscan was endowed with a lively imagination. Ceylon was not very far. It was the "Paradise" where the Muslims pointed to the lake formed by the tears of Adam and Eve mourning for their son Abel. Before leaving India, Marignolli set up a pillar at Cape Comorin, the extremity of the Indian peninsula in full view of Ceylon. "More glorious than Alexander the Great," says he, "when he set up his column (in India), for I erected a stone as my landmark and memorial in the corner of the world over against Paradise *in titulum fundens oleum desuper*.[84] In sooth, it was a marble pillar with a stone cross upon it, intended to last till the world's end. And it had the Pope's arms and my own engraved upon it with inscriptions both in Indian and Latin characters. I consecrated and blessed it in the presence of an infinite multitude of people, and I was carried on the shoulders of the chiefs in a litter or palanquin like Solomon's."[85]

[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 381-82.

[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 375-77.

[84] Gen. XXVIII, 18. "For a title pouring oil upon the top of it."

[85] Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 344. Brou, *art. cit.*, p. 601. Later this monument was attributed to St. Thomas by the local people. Baldaeus, who reports this, saw the pillar in 1662. "Three hundred years of tradition," observes Yule, "might easily swamp the dim memory of John the Legate in that of Thomas the Apostle." *Op. cit.*, p. 345.

CHAPTER IV

THE PORTUGUESE IN INDIA

When on May 20, 1498, Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on the Malabar coast, ten months after setting sail from Lisbon, he had brought to a successful conclusion almost a century of consistent effort on the part of the Portuguese explorers in the quest of a sea-route to India, by doubling the Cape of Good Hope. The credit for this stupendous achievement goes to Prince Henry the Navigator; for it was he who conceived the ambitious and enterprising scheme of sailing round the southernmost point of Africa, in an attempt to turn the flank of Islam, by joining forces with the Christian emperor, Prester John. At this time the Ottoman Turks were threatening to overrun Western Europe, a threat which could be met only by taking them in the rear.

The image of this Prester John had flitted without a fixed habitat in the vague and contradictory notices about him in the works of the medieval geographers. In the fourteenth century the map of the world of Renulf Hygden included his kingdom in Tartary. The map of the world of the *Chronicon* of 1320 placed it in the Indian sub-continent. The Venetian Marino Sanuto, of about the same date, assigned it to lower India, *India Inferior*. According to the chart of the Borgia Museum of 1404, it was synonymous with China or Cathay, while the world map of the Pitti Palace of 1417 located it in the mountain fastnesses, which terminated in the Gulf of Korea.[1] Earlier, passing through Tenduc, Marco Polo had reported of a Christian king named George, a lineal descendant of Prester John, who ruled there.[2] This had been confirmed by John of Monte Corvino, the intrepid missioner, in his letter dated January 8, 1305, from Peking, to Pope Nicholas IV.[3] Prince

[1] Visconde de Santarem, *Histoire de la Cosmographie et de la Cartographie*, vol. III, pp. xx, 10, 195, 274, 338, cited in Bragança-Pereira, "História Religiosa de Goa," *OP*, nos. 2 and 3, p. 6.

[2] Yule, ed., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, The Venetian concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, vol. I, pp. 240-41.

[3] Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

Henry lighted upon this precious piece of information while reading Marco Polo's book, which his brother D. Pedro had brought home on his return from his travels in Central Europe in 1428.[4]

The Portuguese navigators embarked upon their mission of exploration of the African coast with method and science. Prince Henry built at Sagres, near Cape Vincent, a naval arsenal and an observatory. At this observatory the rough instruments, by which the mariners directed their course at sea, were improved, and from it missions of exploration were sent out. Each of these expeditions was expected to forge further ahead than its predecessor. Their reports were studied with care and the information which each report yielded was secured by duly plotting it on the map. These expeditions were so far successful that by 1418 they discovered the islands of Porto Santo, by 1419 that of Madeira, and about 1429 the Azores; in 1434 they doubled the Cape of Bojador, in 1441 the White Cape, in 1457 Cape Verde, and in 1481 they penetrated the kingdom of Congo.[5]

In order to secure the gains in Africa for his country, D. João I, the Portuguese king, petitioned the Holy See, and Pope Martin V declaring sacrosanct the overseas enterprise of the Portuguese, erected in 1417, by his bull *Romanus Pontifex*, the diocese of Ceuta. By another bull, *Sane Carissimus* of 1418, he invited the princes as well as the people of Europe, to help the Portuguese monarch in his undertaking, offering them ample indulgences. He recommended to the bishops that they should preach a crusade every time D. João turned to attack the Moors. He also decreed that all the fortresses taken from the latter should belong to D. João.[6] In the opinion of João de Barros, the historian, this was tantamount to an international organization, giving its sanction to their occupation—the Church having been then regarded as the universally acknowledged agency for distributing among the Catholic faithful the lands belonging to those not subject to her yoke.[7]

On his part Henry the Navigator wrote to the Christian princes requesting their co-operation in this holy enterprise. He offered

[4] Oliveira Martins, *Os filhos de D. João I*, p. 67, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, p. 4.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

[6] *Bul. Patr.*, vol. I, p. 9, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, p. 8.

[7] Barros, *Da Asia*, Decada I, liv. VI, cap. I, p. 14.

to share with them equally all the profits accruing from it. But he also gave them clearly to understand that in case they did not agree to participate in it, they would be required to renounce all claim to such profits. For this purpose he sent to Pope Eugenus IV as his personal envoy, Fernão Lopes D'Azavedo, with the instrument of renunciation he had wrung from the princes and asking His Holiness to confirm, with his blessing and with that of his successors, the Portuguese mission "in their conquest and commerce in these regions till the end of the whole of India."[8] By this means Portugal was relieved of all the claims of her predecessors in the field—the Genoese, the Catalans, the Castillians, the Moroccans, and the Majorcans. On the map of the world of Angelino Dulcert, dated 1339, Lançarote, one of the Canary Islands in the Atlantic, is marked as a Genoese possession. The Genoese were followed by the Catalans and Majorcans, since in 1343 James Ferrer advanced as far as the Golden River between Cape Bojador and Cape White, and in 1352 James Sagarra disembarked in the Canaries. Finally, in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Castillians, the Andalusians, and the Basques, led plundering excursions in the African islands and brought to Seville the native princes loaded with chains. But none of these peoples followed up their gains. Preferring pearl-fishing and commercial dealings with the Berbers of North Africa, the Genoese abandoned the Atlantic adventures, and while the Castillians were overwhelmed by a political crisis, Majorca was absorbed in the Catalan union.[9] By the Treaty of Alcaçoves, Portugal and Spain agreed to sink their differences over the possession of the Canary Islands. It was stipulated by this Treaty that the king of Portugal, and his heirs and successors, should be vested with the lordship of Guinea and the Capes of Bojador and Nao as far as the Indies—inclusive of all the adjacent seas and islands already discovered and to be discovered with all their commerce, barter, and fisheries, as well as the islands of Madeira, Azores, and Cape Verde. All these conquests were to vest, *in solidu*, in the king of Portugal, while in the crown of Castella and its successors should vest, *in solidu*, the Canary Islands and all the acquisitions in the kingdom

[8] Duarte Pacheco, *Esmeraldo de situ orbis* (1892), p. 38, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[9] Déprez, "Les Grands Voyages et les Grandes Découvertes," *Bulletin of the International Committee of Historical Sciences*, vol. II, p. 561.

of Granada.[10] On January 8, 1455, Pope Nicholas V put his seal on what had been tacitly agreed to among the Christian princes. The Pope averred that "Prince Henry, who had always combated the Muslims, would continue his service to God and navigate the ocean to the South and then to the East—a feat which, till the present, no nation of Europe had accomplished, and that he would succeed in reaching India, where he would meet the peoples who are said to adore the name of Christ and avail himself of their aid in favour of the Christians against the Saracens and other enemies of the Faith, and would thus make it possible for the Portuguese to preach the religion of God in the remotest regions." The Pope ended by confirming the king of Portugal in the possession of the territories they had discovered.[11]

Bent on carrying to a successful conclusion the glorious enterprise of his illustrious uncle, D. João II equipped a squadron of three ships in 1487 and appointed Bartholomew Dias to its command, instructing him that he should land at regular intervals on the African coast negroes and negresses, in order to announce to the people that the king of Portugal was sending them to discover the route to India and make particular inquiries of a prince called Prester John. He also sent by land to the East, Pero de Covilhã and Afonso de Paiva because, as João de Barros says, "he had heard from the Abyssinian monks who came to these parts of Spain, and also from some of our friars, who had gone to Jerusalem on pilgrimage, that his state was a land which was south of Egypt, extending as far as the Southern Sea."[12]

Bartholomew Dias rounded Africa's southernmost point and D. João II triumphantly christened it the Cape of Good Hope (1487). It was quickly realized that the sea coast must turn to the north and the north-east, leading to Ethiopia and thence to Arabia from where, it was certain, India could be reached.[13] In the meanwhile Covilhã and Paiva proceeded as far as Aden at which parting of the ways the former, leaving his companion, sailed to India by a Moorish vessel. At Cananore and Calicut, he had a glimpse of how the traffic in spices was carried on and from Goa, where he was greeted by the two Jews, Joseph and Abraham, whom D. João II

[10] Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, p. 11.
[11] *Bul. Patr.*, vol. I, p. 31, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, p. 12.
[12] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada I, liv. III, cap. IV, p. 183.
[13] Duarte Pacheco, *op. cit.*, p. 90, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, p. 14.

had sent in advance, he was able to transmit to the king through Joseph the information he had gathered about the East in the course of his travel and voyage.[14]

Internal troubles, however, prevented D. João II from following up Bartholomew's achievement in doubling the Cape and so the glory of discovering the sea-route to India was reserved for his successor, D. Manuel I. In January 1497, Manuel summoned Vasco da Gama and the expedition which was destined to lay the foundation of a vast empire, with which he was entrusted, set sail from the mouth of the Tagus. Having successfully negotiated the Cape, Vasco da Gama reached Melinda in Kenya, on the east coast of Africa, where he enlisted the services of the Gujarati pilot Aḥmed Ibn Mājid ; and on May 20, 1498, the squadron sighted Calicut on the Malabar coast. While Mājid, in announcing the event, asked for reward, the Portuguese fell on their knees in thanksgiving to Providence, which had brought this momentous undertaking to a successful conclusion, and began singing the *Salve Regina*.[15]

This pilot is referred to by the Portuguese historians as Malemo Cana or simply Canaca, which names are evidently the Portuguese corruption of a current local expression compounded respectively of an Arabic and a Tamil word Mu'allam Kanaka, the former meaning a captain, and the latter meaning an astronomer.[16] According to the Arabic history of the conquest of Yemen by the Ottoman Turks *Al bark al-Yamānī fī al-faṭh al-'otmānī*, Ibn Mājid was besotted by Vasco da Gama into blurting out instructions as to what route he should take :

> Avoid this coast ; launch out on the open sea ; you will then approach the Indian coast, and be sheltered from the waves.[17]

However, to blame the lapse of their co-religionists on drink supplied by their antagonists, is a stock-in-trade to which Muslim historians have had recourse once too often. It was no lapse at all in the case of Ibn Mājid, who had knowledge enough to gauge

[14] Francisco Alvares, *Verdadera informacão das terras do Preste Joam das Indias*, p. 129, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *loc. cit.*

[15] Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.* p. 15.

[16] Ferrand, *Instructions nautiques et routiers Arabes et Portugais des XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, p. 196.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 189-90.

the magnitude of this stupendous achievement of Vasco da Gama in braving the seas to reach Melinda, and who must have therefore deemed it a privilege to help the heroic admiral to cover the last lap of his voyage, which would have been completed none the less. It was therefore a happy coincidence that Ibn Mājid, the most celebrated navigator of his times in India, should have been present on the occasion at Melinda to lead da Gama to the Indian shores, thus lending a hand in the accomplishment of an event which marked the beginning of one era and the end of another. In his *Al-Muhit*, Sidi Ali eulogizes Ibn Mājid as a seeker after truth among mariners, and the most worthy of credence among the pilots and mariners of the west coast of India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In fact, born in a well-known family of navigators, Ibn Mājid further advanced the knowledge of nautical science to which substantial contributions had already been made by his own father and grandfather. He set down in no fewer than thirty-five works, written in verse to facilitate memory, his own vast experience of forty years in this field. In delineating his ideal of a *mu'allam* in one of his works, he has afforded us an insight into his own personality :

The navigator should be conversant with many particulars. He should, in the first place, have knowledge of the signs of the Zodiac, the *hann* i.e., the rhumb-lines, the routes, the distances, the *basi* (how to measure the height of the stars, and to know the sea and landmarks), the time when the sun and the moon enter the signs of the Zodiac, the winds and their seasons, the monsoons, the instruments which are used on board ; that which is useful, that which is dangerous, and that which one is compelled to do during a voyage. He should also know the hour and the place of the rising of the asterisms, the equinoxes, the manner of taking the height of the stars, and the way to co-ordinate these data, the rising of the stars and the setting of the same, their longitude, their latitude, their distances both from the equator and the poles, the paths which they describe : all this and much more he who wishes to be an experienced mu'allam should know. He must be familiar with all the coasts, their landfalls, their sea-marks such as their muddy bottom, the weeds—which are met with on the surface, the water-snakes, the fishes, the mariza, the winds, the change of waters, the tides

of the sea; the islands wherever they may be. He should improve all the instruments used in navigation. He will endeavour to strengthen as much as possible the vessels with the best gear and equipment in order to strengthen their power of resistance; to see that they do not carry a greater load than usual or more passengers than they should; that the ship is powerfully supplied; and that one sails only with the monsoon. He should provide for the dangers the ship is likely to meet with, etc. The mu'allam should bear the fatigue with patience. He should know to distinguish between haste and activity. He should be a savant, learned in many things, firm, daring, of pleasing speech, just, careful not to do wrong to any who are God-fearing and confiding in Allah the highest, not attending to the rights of the merchants except in cases which are brought before him or according to the prevailing rules; full of patience, in the spirit of inquiry, bearing with everything and sympathetic towards all, refraining from doing what he should not do; be well educated and of a cheerful disposition. When he embodies in himself all these qualities he should begin by trying to acquire knowledge of the lunar houses, and as each of their stars has for some reason a name of its own, he should try to know them all.[18]

According to João de Barros, Ibn Mājid visited Vasco da Gama in the company of some Banias (traders) of Gujarat who, on hearing that there was an image of Our Lady on board, went to the ship to pay their homage. The Portuguese, whom he met, were so highly impressed by his conversation that they introduced Ibn Mājid to the admiral. The latter was satisfied with his knowledge and was struck with admiration when he showed him his chart of navigation, complete with details of longitudes and latitudes, unlike the charts used by western navigators, which were overcrowded with signs indicating the direction of the winds and the needle. The reason for this was that the squares described by the lines of longitude and latitude were too small for these details, with the result that the rhumb-lines running north to south and east to west gave a clear indication of the coast. Vasco da Gama proudly showed the Indian navigator a large astrolabe of wood and others of metal used for measuring the altitude of the sun. Ibn

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 180-81.

Mājid manifested no surprise at all, but told the admiral that the Arab pilots used a quadrant and a sextant of brass to measure the altitude of the sun and above all of the stars, meaning the Pleiades, which helped them in the direction of their courses. But he added that the mariners of Gujarat and, in fact, the Indian pilots in general, navigated using certain stars both northern and southern, and others which are always found in the middle of the skies, from east to west. They were not used to measuring the altitude with the instruments which da Gama had shown him, but with another which was quite different, and he produced the instrument before him, consisting of three boards. Da Gama, as a result of this and other interviews, which he had with Ibn Mājid, came to believe that he had found in him a priceless treasure.[19]

Few events in human history have been followed by such tremendous repercussions as this discovery of the sea-route by the Portuguese. Vast countries which were hitherto known to one another only by name, were suddenly brought into closest contact, and spices were now shipped direct to Lisbon from the Indies. As a result, the lucrative trade which the Turks had been plying in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, on a monopolistic basis since the fall of Constantinople, was paralysed and the Muslim countries along the overland route through which it passed, and which it had enriched, were now faced with ruin.[20]

Naturally enough, the Turks were not prepared to accept the change without a struggle. They raised insuperable difficulties in the path of the new-comers. Early in 1507 the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt sent a strong fleet to drive the Portuguese from the Indian seas. The fleet reached Diu, an island off the coast of Kathiawar to the north-west of India, and joined by Malik Ayaz, the Captain of this island, in September, it inflicted a severe defeat on a Portuguese squadron at Chaul, twenty-five miles to the south of Bombay, on its way from Cochin to meet the enemy. It now looked as though the naval supremacy would pass from the Portuguese hands. But the Viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, was soon on the track of the Egyptians. He found the Moorish vessels anchored at Diu, and gained a signal victory on February 3, 1509.[21] The

[19] Barros, *Da Asia*, Decada I, liv. IV, cap. VI, pp. 318-20.

[20] *CHI*, vol. V, p. 1.; Whiteway, *Rise of the Portuguese Power in India* pp. 7-8.

he Portuguese in India, vol. I, pp. 229-41.

enemies had indeed been beaten, but not yet crushed, and there was no knowing when they would return to the attack.

This was the situation when Albuquerque started for India in 1506 in the capacity of Captain under Tristão da Cunha, with the modest mission of taking his position at Guardafui, the eastern-most point of Africa opposite the island of Socotra, at the head of five ships, to rush the ships proceeding to Mecca. It was not long before he realized that so long as the Turks were able to carry the eastern products across the Arabian Sea and pass them on to Venice and Genoa through the shorter and safer route of the Mediterranean, it would not be practicable to carry these products along the long and perilous route of the "Cape of Tortures" (Cape of Good Hope), and offer them at competitive rates in the markets. Under the circumstances, the only possible plan for the realization of the commercial politics of Portugal in the East, was to secure the command of the sea by building strong fortresses at strategic points from which the whole traffic of the Indian Seas could be controlled and the Turkish rivals altogether ousted. Albuquerque clearly saw the danger involved in the policy of Almeida to trust to the strength of the fleet alone, which was immobilized, and also put out of action, during the rainy season owing to the storms which made navigation impossible. He felt that if the Portuguese did not make themselves masters of the strategic points, their supremacy would soon slip from their grasp. For eliminating Turkish competition from eastern trade it was essential that the Indian Ocean be turned into a Portuguese lake. Moreover, if the forts were strongly built and adequately manned they could be successfully defended against any indigenous power. It was equally necessary for the realization of Portuguese policy in the East that they should fix their headquarters in a city of their own—rich, populous and strong, which would yield a revenue large enough to maintain an irresistible power, while continuing to feed the wealth of their mother-country with eastern exports.

Albuquerque proceeded to put these principles into practice, when he succeeded Almeida as Governor in 1509. Cochin, which was then the Portuguese headquarters in India, was clearly unsuited for the purpose of their metropolis in the East, as it was the capital of a friendly prince who had offered them hospitality and so could not be wrested from him. On the other hand, the city of Goa to the north, answered to all the requirements of a Portuguese capital.

"The things of Goa are so great," he wrote to D. Manuel, on October 17, 1510, "both as regards the defence of India as well as the wherewithal for the necessary expenditure, and the supply of workmen, timber, iron, saltpetre, flax, rice, provisions, cotton fabrics, etc., that in my opinion without Goa you will not be able to maintain India."[22] And in fact, whereas the European workers became unfit due to the rigours of the Indian climate at the end of a year's work, there were in Goa skilled labourers who could very well take their place. Goa possessed ships and galleons, and in its ship-building yards splendid fleets could be built. The entrance to the port was deep and the harbour was well sheltered, while the riches of the soil and the abundance of game guaranteed an easy life, unaided by any subsidy from the Crown. And last, but not the least, being an island, it could easily be defended.[23]

Goa was therefore a precious acquisition, and Albuquerque proceeded to possess himself of it on hearing of its weak defences. He met with only a feeble resistance from the garrison, who offered the keys of the fortress on March 4, 1510. Albuquerque's first care was to strengthen the defence in case Yūsuf 'Ādil Shāh, the Sultan of Bijapur, to whom it belonged, attempted to recover the place. But despite all his preparations and individual attention to every detail of defence, he was compelled to surrender the city when Yūsuf 'Ādil Shāh attacked it in force, and retire to Anjediva at a short distance on August 16. During the next two months he received important reinforcements in ships and men, and at the end of November he sailed back to Goa and took the city by storm.[24]

A wise statesman, Albuquerque realized that a small nation like Portugal could maintain its hold over India only by winning the sympathy of the indigenous population. He allowed complete religious toleration to the Hindus, and except for Sati which he forthwith abolished, he compromised with their usages and customs. He wished that the change of rulers should be felt as little as possible by the local people, and allowed the system of village communities to continue. This was a system under which the inhabitants of the villages occupied the land in common and enjoyed a true adminis-

[22] *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque*, vol. I, p. 21.

[23] Costa, "Affonso de Albuquerque e o Imperio da India," *Boletim da Segunda Classe*, vol. IV, pp. 106.

[24] *CHI*, vol. V, p. 10.

trative autonomy. Each village community was administered by an assembly of villagers—the *gauncars*—all of whom had the right of taking part in the discussions, the votes being restricted to the heads of families originally associated. The village assembly compounded the taxes with a lump sum at the exchequer. The confederation of the various villages made up the province, which had as its capital the place where the temple was situated. Here was assembled the provincial assembly, which was made up of two deputies from each village, and which administered the affairs of the province.[25]

Albuquerque devoted all his energies to strengthening Goa and increasing its commercial importance. He gave every encouragement to trade, and vessels soon began to arrive there from various ports. But above all Albuquerque wished to secure for Goa the monopoly of horse trade. The horses were imported into the country from Arabia and were an important arm in Indian warfare. The monopoly of supply would naturally secure for the Portuguese a large influence in Indian politics. Accordingly, Albuquerque dispatched his captains along the coast to compel the ships carrying horses to put into Goa.[26] And to assure the security of the city, he attacked and took the fort of Banastarim, six miles from Goa, which had been strongly fortified and garrisoned by the sultan of Bijapur, and was a menace to the safety of Goa.[27]

The fall of Goa to the Portuguese greatly enhanced their prestige in the eyes of the indigenous powers. It dealt a death-blow to the coalition, which the rulers of Gujarat, Bijapur, and Calicut had formed against them with the Turks, with the object of expelling them from India, and encouraged others to enter into friendly relations with them, now that it was evident that the Portuguese had come to stay. The sultan of Gujarat showed an inclination to allow the Portuguese to fortify Diu. Chaul soon passed under Portuguese control. The king of Honavar acknowledged their suzerainty and that of Bhatkal became their trusted ally. Other petty coastal chiefs till the Mount of Dely were glad to exchange

[25] Costa, *art. cit.*, pp. 107-108; Cunha Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez Oriental*, Fasciculo 5, no. 58 (Foral de usos e costumes dos Gancares e Lavradores desta Ilha de Goa).

[26] *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. II, pp. 39,40.

[27] Danvers, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 247-49.

their goods with those of the Portuguese, and to supply them with provisions. The rajah of Cananore concluded a treaty of friendship with Albuquerque, and his example was soon followed by the rajahs of Calicut and Quilon. In Ceylon one of the contestants for the throne asked the Portuguese for help, binding himself to give them a place to build a fort. The king of the Moluccas requested the help of the Portuguese king, acknowledging his suzerainty. The king of Pegu received the Portuguese with great enthusiasm and was eager in seeking their friendship and protection, and established trade relations. All over the East the princes and people were vying with one another to conclude an alliance with the Portuguese. The sultan of Bijapur, from whom Albuquerque had wrested Goa, came to terms with him.[28] "Your men go about safely all over India by sea and land," wrote Albuquerque to D. Manuel on November 30, 1513, "in all the vast territories of Cambay no one asks them whither they are proceeding; throughout the kingdom of the Deccan as throughout Malabar they sell and buy all over the place. . . ."[29]

Albuquerque next addressed himself to the task of securing the commerce of the sea by building positions of strength at strategic points and making it impossible for eastern products to be carried to the Mediterranean ports. These strategic points were Malacca, Hormuz, and Aden, which held the key to the commerce of the East. On April 15, 1511, Albuquerque set out for Malacca where all the trade between China and India was concentrated. His first attack, on July 25, was inconclusive, and Albuquerque's captains were against making further attempts. He, however, convinced them that if they could only take Malacca from the Moors, Cairo and Mecca would be entirely ruined, and Venice would then be able to obtain no spices, except what her merchants bought in Portugal. In August 1511, the Portuguese attacked Malacca a second time, and the city was carried. Such great importance was attached to the event that when D. Manuel informed Pope Leo X of the Portuguese triumph, the Pope made the news the occasion of a series of ceremonies of public thanksgiving of unusual pomp and splendour.[30]

In February 1513, Albuquerque set out on the expedition to reduce Aden, which controls the entrance to the Red Sea. In

[28] Costa, *art. cit.*, pp. 110-11.

[29] *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque*, vol. I, pp. 138-39.

[30] *CHI*, vol. V, p. 11; Danvers, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 224-28.

order to avoid the fire from the Portuguese guns, the Aden garrison lured the Portuguese into the city and after four hours of hand-to-hand fighting the besiegers were compelled to retire to their ships. Albuquerque then decided to proceed to Jedda, but meeting with adverse winds he made for Kamaran. He destroyed all the fortifications on this island, and returned to Aden, but finding it more strongly defended, sailed for India in August 1513.[31]

Albuquerque had realized the importance of Hormuz as early as 1506, when he had come out to India in the company of Tristão da Cunha. As C. Roque da Costa has truly observed, "Hormuz was the centre of all eastern trade and an entrepôt where the caravans which conveyed the merchandise of the East to the Mediterranean ports came to be equipped with provisions. Its strategic position at the head of the Persian Gulf made her at once the key to the Red Sea as to India." Moreover, with its material resources it could provide for the prosecution of the Portuguese campaign without straining the financial reserves of the mother-country. What was of greater consequence, however, was that Hormuz supplied Arab steeds to the states of the Indian sub-continent. Albuquerque wanted to capture the place then and there, but was prevented from doing so by the short-sightedness of his companions, who were too much engrossed in the profitable business of seizing the ships from Mecca to attend to the vital interests of the nation. He had therefore to rest content with a simple promise of vassalage on the part of the *rais* of Hormuz.[32] Albuquerque wrote to D. Manuel on November 27, 1514:

> We shall be able to have there a large revenue to meet our own needs, the expenses of the fleet and the wages of the men, and our situation in India will improve a little; I shall be able to man the fleet and await the Rumes (Turks) at the proper season and seize them, and then there will be further time and leisure to proceed to the Red Sea.[33]

In 1515 Albuquerque proceeded to Hormuz and established absolute control over the city.

Another idea of Albuquerque was that the Portuguese should

[31] *CHI*, vol. V, pp. 11-12.
[32] Costa, *art. cit.*, p. 103.
[33] *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque*, vol. I, p. 346.

bind themselves in a close alliance with the Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar, which was then resisting, single-handed, the armed might of Islam. Even before taking Goa he had dispatched an ambassador to Vijayanagar, in the person of Friar Louis. He instructed the latter to propose to Krishna Deva Raya, the emperor, that he should help the Portuguese in their war against their common enemies, the Muslims, with his army, towns, harbours, and provisions—in fact, with everything that he might require from his kingdom. In return, the Portuguese would assist Vijayanagar with their fleets and armies, whenever and as often as was necessary; and would abstain from attacking ships making for Vijayanagar ports. The friar was also to tell the emperor of the intended attack of the Portuguese in Goa; and that in the event of this city passing into their hands, the Portuguese would be in a position to supply him with all the horses that were shipped to this port. Even as it was, with Hormuz already under their tutelage the Portuguese were able to send the horses directly to the Vijayanagar ports.[34]

Krishna Deva Raya, however, could not agree to break definitely with the Muslim kingdoms before the new-comers had given proof of their power. In actual fact, before the dispatch of Friar Louis to Vijayanagar, Albuquerque had suffered a defeat at the hands of a third-rate power like the Zamorin of Calicut. The result was that Krishna Deva Raya showed himself unwilling to sign the agreement. Even after Goa fell to the Portuguese for the first time, he could not be sure of the power of Portugal. Accordingly, when Albuquerque sent Gaspar Chanoca proposing that he should make war on the Bijapur kingdom, while the Portuguese on their part would seize every Muslim ship in the Indian seas, Krishna Deva Raya turned an evasive reply without binding himself in specific terms.[35] It was only when Albuquerque seized Goa a second time, and the Portuguese had firmly entrenched themselves there that he sent his ambassador Retelim Cherim to Albuquerque, and concluded a treaty of alliance with the Portuguese.[36] The alliance was mutually beneficial. The Portuguese dealt a staggering blow to aggressive Islam in India and saved South India for the Hindu religion and culture, while Vijayanagar gave a free hand

[34] *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. II, pp. 74-77.
[35] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada II, liv. V, cap. III, p. 204.
[36] *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. IV, pp. 123-125.

to the Portuguese in the matter of trade and commerce.

Albuquerque had thus secured almost all his objectives. He had done more than any other Portuguese leader to establish the prestige of his king and to make his countrymen respected and feared throughout the East. There is hardly any doubt that had he lived long enough, he would have succeeded in annexing Aden. He wished to build a fort there and occupy the island of Cira to make up for the supply of water which was wanting at Aden. His object was to secure the old and shorter route to Europe for his mother-country, taking the eastern produce, as before, along the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. Massawa and Dahlak were to be the principal ports on the Red Sea, as these places possessed an abundant supply of goods and were centres of trade with Ethiopia.[37] He wrote to D. Manuel on October 20, 1514:

> Massawa and Dahlak which are at present in the possession of the Sheikh of Aden and have an owner, together with the fishery of Aljofar lying around them, are the most profitable objectives existing in those parts, because the island of Massawa is the principal outlet of the land of Prester John, in the possession of the Moors. Dahlak is a very big island, having plenty of cattle and much water, and the fishery of Aljofar is great for the output of the fish that is caught there each year.[38]

In order to achieve his plan, he counted on the assistance of Prester John of Abyssinia. But when after his conquest of Hormuz he was about to turn to Aden, he was stung to death by news that despite his great services he had been superseded by Lopo Soares, his personal enemy.

On his way to Goa when he felt his approaching end he addressed to the king the last letter which he dictated on December 6, 1515:

> This letter to Your Majesty is not written by my hand, as when I write I am troubled with hiccups, which is a sign of approaching death. I have here a son to whom I bequeath the little I possess. Events in India will speak for themselves as well as for me. I

[37] Costa, *art. cit.*, p. 113.

[38] *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque*, vol. I, p. 283.

leave the chief place in India in Your Majesty's power, the only thing left to be done being the closing of the gates of the straits. . . .[39]

The Portuguese enterprise was thus a crusade against Islam. It was an act of the defence of Europe against the Muslim menace. The Portuguese attacked Islam in its flank in India and cut off its arteries of trade. They succeeded in dispossessing Islam of the keys of commerce in the East, and in placing it on the defensive. They neutralized the victories of triumphant Islam in the West by the annihilation of its sea-power and the establishment of the Portuguese hegemony in the eastern waters. As Grousset has written:

The close correspondence of dates is significant. In 1498 the Ottoman advance guards landed at Calicut. In 1503, Venice lost to the Turks Moron, Coran, and Lepanto; but, in 1509 the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco d'Almeida secured the mastery of the Indian Ocean by destroying off Diu the united fleets of the Sultan of Egypt and the Zamorin of Calicut. In 1522, Suleiman the Magnificent captured Rhodes, but in 1527 the Portuguese scattered the fleet of the Shah of Gujarat. In 1532, the Turks ravaged Austria; but in 1537 the fleet which they had sent to the aid of Gujarat was routed by João de Castro.[40]

The religious aspect of the mission comes out even more prominently in a letter, dated March 1, 1500, which Pedro Alvares Cabral, leader of the second expedition to India, carried from D. Manuel I to the Zamorin, under the mistaken impression that the latter was a Christian, and in which the king observed:

We give praise to God for our achievement (in reaching India) and for the information that there are in these countries Christian people. It will be our principal object to speak to you of these latter and to profit, whilst also maintaining the love and fraternity which ought to prevail among Christian kings. For we believe that God, Our Lord, did not permit this great achievement of our navy only to serve our temporal interests, but also

[39] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 380-81.
[40] Grousset, *The Sum of History*, p. 20.

to strive for the spiritual betterment of souls and their salvation. It pleased God to bequeath both to you and to us the same Christian faith by which the whole world was united for six hundred years after the birth of Christ, until at last by the sins of mankind, there came certain sects and creeds contrary to the primitive religion of Christ, which sects had to come for the justification of the good and on account of the deceit of the wicked. These merited condemnation and loss, because they did not desire to receive the truth to be saved. Wherefore God warned them of what they should know and understand. For doing wrong and acquiescing in falsehoods they were condemned. These sects occupied the greater part of the land between your country and ours—which impeded communication between us. This communication is now opened afresh by our navigation, and thereby God, to whom nothing is impossible, has cleared an obstacle. Wherefore knowing that the hand of God is manifest in all this and desiring to serve Him by carrying out His will, we are now sending you our captain, ships, and merchandise, besides a factor who, if it is your pleasure, will remain there to carry out his duties. We are also sending some religious versed in the teachings of Christ, and ecclesiastical ornaments for celebrating the divine office and administering the sacraments. These religious will enable you to know the doctrines of the Christian faith, instituted by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and as imparted to the twelve apostles, His disciples. After His holy resurrection these apostles preached this faith everywhere and it was received by the whole world. Two of them, St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, preached in your parts of India, working many and stupendous miracles and attracting the people away from unbelief and idolatry—in which ere this the whole world was steeped, and converted them to the truth of the holy Christian creed. One of these apostles, St. Peter, was ordered by Our Lord, Jesus Christ, to be His chief vicar. Preaching in the city of Rome, then the centre of idolatry, he suffered martyrdom for Him, and lies buried there. From that time onwards this city has been the seat of the head of the faith of Christ by His command through the successors of St. Peter, the Holy Fathers. The Lord God wished that just as in former times Rome was the mother of error and falsehood, she should now be and continue for ever more to be the mother of truth.

> The reason for undertaking this voyage to your shores is (to make known to you) these things of such high import and profit as well as of service to the Almighty. We, therefore, request you with brotherly affection to conform to the Divine will for your own profit and that of your kingdom, both spiritual and temporal, and wish that it should please you to be friends with us, which conversation and friendship we offer you most peacefully for His holy service. Be pleased to accept this and deal with our captain and our people with the same spirit of love and truth with which we are sending them to you. For, besides the obvious reasons, the repeated and diverse demonstrations of His will ought to convince you that our coming to you is of His ordination. There is, therefore, all the more reason why you should be pleased with a people who come from such a long distance and with such affection, seeking your friendship and company, and bringing you so much profit as you cannot hope to receive from any other country as from ours.[41]

In return for the zeal for, and the sacrifices involved in, the propagation of the Faith, an integral part of her maritime enterprise, Portugal was rewarded by the Holy See with the privilege of *Padroado* or patronage. This distinction resolved itself in concrete terms into the honour accorded by the Holy See to the Patron of the right to present a candidate for a bishopric or other ecclesiastical benefice in the newly discovered territories, and the corresponding duty to protect the Christians in the regions wherever Portugal would establish herself. Portugal acquitted herself of this latter task by getting the local princes to concede to her in their treaties the privilege to look after the Christians and protect their interests. This concession definitely expressed itself in the exemption from the exercise of the jurisdiction of the local courts. The earliest instance of this exemption of Christians from such local jurisdiction occurs in a treaty concluded by Albuquerque with the Zamorin, and confirmed by the Royal Letter of February 26, 1515. It will thus be seen that this treaty antedates by twenty years the capitulations secured by Francis I of France from Sulei-

[41] Letter of D. Manuel to the king of Calicut, sent with Pedro Alvares Cabral, Captain of the first fleet that sailed to India after the discovery of the sea-route by Vasco da Gama, March 1, 1500. *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque*, vol. III, pp. 85-88.

man II the Magnificent of Turkey in February 1535, which is generally recognized by writers on international law as inaugurating the regime of capitulations.[42]

The first pontiff to grant this privilege was Calixtus III by his bull *Aeterni Regis* of June 21, 1481, followed by Alexander VI by his bull *Ineffabilis* of June 1, 1497, which documents extended the privilege to territories stretching from Capes Bojador and Nao through Guinea and the south coast of Africa, as far as India.[43] Leo X by his bull *Praecelsi devotionis* of November 3, 1514, further extended this privilege to all the territories which would be discovered and acquired in the future in whatever part of the world.[44] The stage was thus set for the inauguration of missionary activities under the aegis of the *Padroado Português*.

[42] Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, pp. 22-23 ; Costa, *art. cit.*, p. 109.
[43] *Bul. Patr.*, vol. I, pp. 47, 56, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, p. 20.
[44] *Bul. Patr*, vol. I, p. 106, cited in Bragança-Pereira, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER V

MISSIONS ON THE MALABAR AND COROMANDEL COASTS

In the beginning missionary activity in India developed in the localities where the Portuguese built their factories and forts. Given the economic objective of the discovery of the sea-route, viz., pepper, these factories and forts could be established only on the Malabar coast, where alone this precious commodity could be had. It was needless for the missioners to venture out of these centres. There was enough and more to absorb their energies, what with crowds of non-Christians frequenting these settlements.

The Malabar coast was divided at this time into five principalities—Cananore, Calicut, Cochin, Quilon, and Travancore. Although comparatively small, comprising not more than twelve leagues of the littoral, Calicut exercised a sort of hegemony over the whole of Malabar. Its capital, after which the kingdom was named, was a well-known emporium on the Indian sub-continent, and the Moorish traders who had made their home there, came from places as far distant as Grand Cairo and Mecca. They brought large fleets of merchantmen loaded with valuable merchandise and took in return pepper and drugs. They transhipped these spices to Turkey, whence they were distributed to the various countries of Christian Europe. The Moors realized large fortunes from this traffic, and were respected in the country much more than the local courtiers.[1]

The Portuguese king ardently desired to cultivate friendly relations with the Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut. Vasco da Gama had met with a cold reception at the latter's hands. And yet the king instructed Cabral, who proceeded to India at the head of the next fleet in March 1500, that he should leave no means untried to secure the friendship and sympathy of the Zamorin. The reason for this was the importance of Calicut: if the Portuguese could only secure a firm footing at this international port, the days of the Moorish traders from the Red Sea would be numbered. Cabral succeeded in inducing the Zamorin to sign a treaty of peace

[1] Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 48.

and friendship with the Portuguese, and to agree to the establishment of a factory at Calicut ; but he found the Moorish merchants continuously intriguing with the Zamorin to break with the Portuguese, whose appearance in the Indian waters threatened to end their commercial monopoly.[2]

A group of missioners had accompanied Cabral on this expedition, consisting of eight Franciscans under the leadership of Friar Henry of Coimbra, and nine other priests. They were burning with zeal, and wished to plunge themselves instantly into their work. In view, however, of the campaign against the Portuguese on the part of Arabs, Cabral counselled : *festina lente.* It was advisable to wait for the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust to clear up, rather than mar the prospects the country held out, both for religion and commerce, by injudicious haste. Meanwhile, the missioners could usefully employ themselves in the study of the native tongue, their principal means of conveying the message of the Gospel.[3]

But every day people were flocking to the Portuguese factory, prompted by curiosity to see the Franks. Friar Henry moved among them, and in a short time converted a number of Hindus to the Faith. The Arabs thereupon redoubled their efforts to oust the Portuguese from Calicut. They exaggerated out of all proportion certain unseemly features in their way of life. In the words of Gaspar Correa :

> Beware of the Farangues ! Look well before you fraternize with the kind of men they are. They are so dirty. They do not bathe, nor even wash when they defecate. They move with the untouchables. They eat beef and, what is even more unmentionable, they eat the flesh of an animal that lives on filth. What will they not do when they will make themselves masters of the country ? They will kill cows—what an outrage on religion ! They now lavish money on women of low and untouchable classes with whom they cohabit, eat and live. They will spend more to seduce attractive women of the more respectable classes. Should they fail in this, they will kidnap them and take them by force.[4]

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[3] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada I, liv. V, cap. I, pp. 421-22.
[4] Correa, *Lendas da India*, vol. I, p. 193.

But the Zamorin was still adamant. The Moors then turned to his principal nobles who were in a position to influence his policy. And as the matter would brook no vacillation, they employed the most effective means of achieving their purpose—palm-oil. At this critical stage of the negotiations, Cabral committed a tactical blunder. Tired of waiting for the cargo to load his ships, which the Zamorin was required to supply, Cabral seized a Moorish vessel which was loading in the harbour. In retaliation, the Moors made an attack on the Portuguese factory, in which the Factor and fifty-three of his men lost their lives after a heroic resistance of three hours. Among the killed were three Franciscans, while Friar Henry himself was wounded in the fray.[5]

Among the converts of Friar Henry was a Brahman who took at his baptism the name of Miguel de Santa Maria, and wished to go to Portugal. Cabral found Miguel very useful in his critical situation, because it was Miguel who initiated him into a knowledge of local politics. Cabral learnt from him that there was keen rivalry between the Zamorin and the other coastal princes of Malabar, and that his repulse at Calicut would be an inducement for these powers to entertain the Portuguese at their capitals.[6] As was expected, Cabral met with a warm reception at Cananore and Cochin, lying respectively to the north and south of Calicut, and giving their names to the respective kingdoms. Pepper could be had in abundance at Cochin, but Cananore was lacking in this commodity, though rich in other merchandise such as rice, sugar, honey, butter, coconuts, oil, dried fish, ropes of Cairo, and other cordage. Above all, it was noted for its ginger.[7] Cabral concluded a treaty with the kings of Cochin and Cananore, who not only permitted him to open factories in their cities, but sent their ambassadors with him to Portugal to be accredited at the Court.[8]

On his second voyage to India Vasco da Gama was well-received at Cananore, whose hospitality on the earlier occasion contrasted so markedly with the hostility he had met with at Calicut. In the course of this voyage, he burnt the famous ship *Meri* belonging to the sultan of Cairo, by way of reprisal, as he said in his letter

[5] *Documentacão*, vol. V, p. 397. (*Noticia do que obravão os frades de S. Francisco, etc.*).

[6] Barros, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

[7] Correa, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-90.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 232 ; Faria y Sousa, *Asia Portuguesa*, vol. I, p. 49.

to the Zamorin, for the slaughter of the Portuguese at Calicut. He spared the lives of twenty Moorish children on board, but ordered that they should be brought up as Christians. This was in retaliation for the forced conversion to Islam of a Portuguese whom the Muslims had captured and carried to Mecca.[9]

Vasco da Gama made Cananore the base of a fleet which was stationed on the Malabar coast for the dual purpose of preying upon Moorish shipping and protecting the maritime interests of the friendly powers—Cananore, Cochin, Quilon. The merchants of these kingdoms were now required to provide themselves with permits, which were issued to them on a letter of recommendation from their respective sovereigns.[10] This was the origin of the famous system of *cartazes*, which was imposed upon the country powers as a token of their acknowledgement of Portuguese sovereignty of the seas. Armed with these permits they could ply the high seas under the protection of the Portuguese sea-power and free from the danger of molestation by the fleets of other nations. In 1504, Lopo Soares permitted the king of Cananore to issue the *cartazes* to his merchants, a privilege which that king highly appreciated. For besides being an evidence of confidence which the Portuguese reposed in him, it was a source of considerable income as well.[11]

The Zamorin was vainly trying all this while to bring the king of Cochin back to allegiance. In consequence he invaded Cochin in force as soon as Vasco da Gama set sail for Portugal. Forced to fall back on his own resources, which were inadequate for the purpose of defence, poor Tirumumpara had no other alternative but to seek asylum in the neighbouring island of Vypin, leaving his capital to the tender mercies of the Zamorin. Vypin claimed the right of sanctuary which was universally recognized, besides enjoying the distinction of possessing its own era, whose initial year fell in A.D. 1341, the year when the island was thrown up by the sea, as a result of natural convulsions.[12] The king, however, was delivered from the peril with the appearance of a new Portuguese armada under Francisco and Afonso de Albuquerque, and Francisco de Albuquerque had no difficulty in convincing the king

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.
[10] Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 515.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Menon, *History of Kerala*, vol. I, p. 161.

of the necessity of building at Cochin a fort strong enough to safeguard his own interests as well as those of the Portuguese. The fort, which was inaugurated on November 1, 1503, was called the Fort of St. James and the Portuguese built, at a short distance from it, a church dedicated to St. Bartholomew.[13] Duarte Pacheco was appointed Captain of the fortress, and he covered himself with glory when the Portuguese armada departed, and the Zamorin renewed the war. This war lasted five months, when, seeing that he could make no headway, the Zamorin withdrew to Calicut having lost no fewer than nineteen thousand men.[14] Tirumumpara was so grateful to Pacheco, that on the eve of his departure to Portugal, he presented him with a shield which was illuminated with his armorial bearings and on which were emblazoned in gold five crowns representing the five rajahs Pacheco had slain in the war, together with the names of the seven battles in which he had defeated the Zamorin.[15]

In 1505, there arrived in India Francisco de Almeida, the first Viceroy. He was the bearer of a precious crown which he was bringing as a gift from the king of Portugal to Tirumumpara in recognition of his services. Among Almeida's most urgent tasks was the construction of a strong fort at Cochin. This was rather a difficult matter to negotiate, for the reason that the local prejudices would not admit of the construction in stone and mortar of any edifice other than a royal palace or a temple. Almeida succeeded in overcoming the opposition and the construction commenced on May 3, 1506—the day of the finding of the true cross.[16]

Almeida also built an equally strong fort at Cananore together with a church dedicated to St. James. This fort had been built not a day too soon, because when in 1506, a powerful Moorish fleet appeared before it, determined to demolish the Portuguese settlement on the promontory, the batteries were turned on the fleet and D. Lourenço de Almeida, son of the Viceroy, destroyed it totally, apparently with little effort.[17] It was reported that during the encounter the Moors saw a cavalier in white fighting valiantly on the side of the Portuguese and carrying all before him. The

[13] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada I, liv. VII, cap. II, p. 93.

[14] Danvers, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-114; Silva-Rego, *Historia das Missoes do Padroado Portugues do Oriente*, vol. I, pp. 105-07.

[15] *Keralapazhama*, p. 66, cited in Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

[16] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-09

[17] Danvers, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

Portuguese believed this figure to be none other than St. James himself, for whom Almeida is known to have cherished a particular devotion, and who, it was thought, intervened on behalf of his client during the encounter.[18]

Almeida was succeeded by Afonso de Albuquerque, who aimed at making *pax Lusitania* a reality in the Orient. The change of governors coincided with the accession of a new Zamorin, who was a practical man of affairs. He realized that the Portuguese were by now too firmly entrenched for any country power to be able to turn them out. Enmity with such powerful antagonists would, if not ended in time, result in an agelong feud, disastrous to the interests of Calicut. He therefore made overtures to Albuquerque for a peace, on terms to be settled by the Portuguese themselves, and invited them to select a place in Calicut where they could open a factory and build a fort. As the alliance could not be concluded without the king of Cochin being a party to it, the Zamorin agreed to come to terms with him. He also conceded the monopoly of spices to the Portuguese and consented to obtain *cartazes* from them for the merchant ships of Calicut, thus acknowledging the Portuguese sovereignty of the seas, to the utter disgust and chagrin of the resident Moorish traders.[19]

Nothing could be more welcome to Albuquerque. He rightly felt that if the Portuguese were to identify their interests with those of any of the local powers, they would be embroiled in their quarrels, an eventuality which would defeat the twofold aim of their mission in the East, economic and religious. A fort was accordingly commenced at Calicut on December 7, 1512, together with a church which was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., and the Zamorin in his new-found enthusiasm sent one of his pages, a boy of fifteen, to Portugal not as his ambassador, but to see for himself what the country was like. The Portuguese king was pleased with the lad, who learnt to read and write Portuguese, and asking for baptism, was christened João da Cruz. He lived in the royal palace, where in summer he was seen going about in Indian clothes.[20]

In 1515 Albuquerque was replaced as Governor by Lopo Soares

[18] Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 717.

[19] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 329-30.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 331; Schurhammer, "Letters of D. João da Cruz," *KSP*, series 6, pp. 304-05.

de Albergaria, a determined opponent of his policy, who wished to terminate forthwith the alliance with the Zamorin. He even wanted to abandon the fortress at Calicut. But fortunately for the Portuguese interests, Francisco Nogueira was still there as captain, and had no difficulty in convincing the governor that the Zamorin would be on his best behaviour so long as the fortress remained in their hands.[21] But the wisdom of Albuquerque's policy, in so far as it concerned Calicut, was lost on his successors. For, while the Moors left no stone unturned to estrange the Zamorin from his new friends, the Portuguese were singularly supine to the developments in Calicut. In point of fact when war broke out between Cochin and Calicut in 1521, the Portuguese, though they were prevented by the treaty of 1512 from making common cause with Cochin, were in open sympathy with the rajah. Like one willing to wound but afraid to strike, they loaned him the services of thirty-six gunners with whose assistance he scored some success.[22]

This was enough to alienate the Zamorin. He turned a blind eye to, if not actively instigate the Moors in their repeated attempts on the fort, and, in the absence of reinforcements, the garrison found itself powerless to retaliate. This was the situation when D. Henriques Menezes succeeded Vasco da Gama as governor in 1524. He realized that the Portuguese settlement at Calicut, situated as it was in a hostile terrain, could no longer carry out the object for which such settlements were intended. He resolved to abandon the fort, but not before he had chastised Calicut. He burnt all the ships he could find in the port and landing his troops in the city, he gave it over to plunder. On his departure, however, the Zamorin returned to the attack feeling confident that as it was already late in June, the monsoon having set in, the Portuguese would not be able, what with the rough waters, to rush reinforcements to the beleaguered garrison. All the same the governor dispatched two squadrons, and himself appeared on the scene in force. The Zamorin raised the siege and sued for peace. But finding that no satisfactory terms could be agreed upon, the governor decided to raze the fort to the ground. The Portuguese retired to their ships, having mined the bastions. The enemy was bewildered at their action, especially in view of the fact that they had scored an undisputed victory. The Zamorin's men entered the fort. Some

[21] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 466-67.

[22] Danvers, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

went down the cellars, others went on to the ramparts, and wandered listlessly about the place, when unexpectedly the mines exploded, blowing them to smithereens.[23]

Fighting went on for fourteen years more when the Zamorin, finding that the long-drawn-out struggle was in the interest of no one, not even the Moors, again opened overtures for peace. The efforts of the Turks in 1537-38 to form a combination of country powers for the purpose of expelling the Portuguese had ended in smoke, and the Zamorin had been given a practical demonstration of the Portuguese prowess during the rigorous siege of Diu in 1538. He signed an offensive and defensive treaty with the Portuguese on January 1, 1540, and agreed, as on the previous occasion, to grant the monopoly in pepper and drugs to the latter to the total exclusion of the Turks and the Arabs. By an important stipulation he also agreed to scrap his ships of war, trusting to the ability of the Portuguese sea-power to afford him protection.[24]

In the hostile climate of Calicut, it was natural that Christianity could hardly make any progress. Albuquerque interdicted conversions in the city altogether, although in the treaty of 1512, above referred to, he had secured exemption from local jurisdiction for the Christian converts, who, in this respect, were placed on a footing of equality with the Portuguese themselves. There was danger of the entire body of converts being wiped out in the event of the Moors gaining the ear of the Zamorin. But Albuquerque's successor, Lopo Soares, so far lifted the ban as to allow the conversion of such persons as would not land the Portuguese into difficulties with the local power. Under this arrangement it was not possible to receive certain classes of people, such as slaves, into the church, because after their conversion they would be exempted from the jurisdiction of the Zamorin and would demand to be freed from the encumbrances to which they were subject in their old religion. The local authorities would naturally be loath to permit such a change, lest emancipation from servitude should undermine the economic foundations of the society as it was then constituted. There was thus no incentive for conversions at Calicut. D. Duarte, the Bishop of Dume, observes in his report that, when he passed through Calicut in 1522, not more than two hundred converts

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 374-76; Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 961-62.
[24] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 350-51.

presented themselves before him to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.[25]

In the friendly states of Cochin and Cananore, however, the interest evinced by the people in the Christian Faith exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the missioners. The Portuguese monarch had specially commended the care of the Christians and the promotion of Christianity to D. Francisco de Almeida, the first Viceroy:

> We recommend that you should favour the Christians in whatever you do, wherever you may find them. You should honour them and have them honoured in everything. In like manner you should also treat the new converts, whatever may be the nationality to which they belong, while both should be catechized and well instructed in the doctrines of the Faith. We wish that you pay special attention to this, because despite the fact that the religious who go (to these countries) do take good care of this, it will be most profitable if you also attend to it.[26]

What with the moral and material support of the Viceroy the Franciscan friars, who had accompanied Almeida, applied themselves to their task in earnest. Their converts, however, were mostly from the poorest classes, and such was the renown the Portuguese had earned by their resounding victories against the Turks, the erstwhile lords of the sea, that there was reasonable hope that these humbler classes would join the church in ever increasing numbers. But the stumbling block in the path of the progress of Christianity at Calicut existed at Cochin and Cananore as well. As in Calicut, the governments of both these kingdoms objected to the conversion of persons of humbler castes and would allow only a few at a time to convert themselves, refusing permission to the able-bodied altogether. As a high officer wrote to the Portuguese Crown on the position at Cochin in November, 1506: "The people of the land are very poor . . . and the new Christians who are not of the richer classes grow and multiply, praising the great and eternal God, and as many of them as the king permits go to baptism, which is not inconsiderable. Their number would increase by leaps and bounds, but for the refusal of the king specially

[25] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 444.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

to the able-bodied."[27] On December 6, 1507, the ruler of Cananore actually protested to the king of Portugal against the proceeding of the missioners in converting persons of the slave castes. He wrote: "I desire that certain people whom I and my Naires[28] have as slaves and who belong to two castes, viz., the Tines (Tiyan) and the Mucoas, should not be made Christians; neither should Nairs nor Brahmans. For with the conversion of these slaves conflict may arise between our vassals and these people. The Naires derive their income from them and they do not want to lose it."[29]

But it was heart-rending to see the grinding poverty of these people. And so the Viceroy ordered that the sick and the necessitous among them should be supplied with medicines and provisions in proportion to their needs, and should be admitted for treatment in the hospital,[30] should they so desire. The missioners, who often visited these patients in the hospital, made it a point to relate the life of Our Lord, and explain the chief articles of the Faith, specially to those on the point of death, and assist them in their agony. These unsophisticated people were charmed by the life of Our Lord and died with the divine name of Jesus and that of His holy mother on their lips. According to the orders of the Viceroy they were buried with the same funebrial pomp as were the Portuguese themselves, with the chanting of the Office and so forth. This had a telling effect on the Hindus of the higher castes as well as Muslims, who began making inquiries into a Faith which commanded such brotherly affection among its members.[31]

With the flow of conversions from the masses having thus been restricted by the ban of the governments, conversions had perforce to be limited to those whom it did not affect. These were the young virgins whom the Portuguese soldiery purchased from their mothers, and the lewd women whom they visited. One of the strictest injunctions of the Crown to the Viceroy had been that "he should be particularly vigilant with regard to the dealings of his men with native women, because besides doing disservice to the Lord, it is a source of great scandal to the natives."[32] And

[27] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 52.

[28] "The Kshatriya Nobility of Malabar. Cf. chapter V, section I.

[29] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 61-62.

[30] Hospital of Santa Cruz at Cochin in 1506. Cf. chapter IV.

[31] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 53.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

the Viceroy on his part had threatened his men with severe penalties for such irregular connections, and forbidden the conversion of women of loose character. But the viceregal orders in this regard were honoured more in the breach than in the observance, and these women somehow found their way into the church. In due course other women also converted themselves, induced by the flourishing condition of these Christian sirens. Some of these women were Muslims who were infatuated with the Portuguese soldiers. As Gaspar Correa, in his usual frank and open manner observes, "the more their husbands tried to shut them up, the more they fled from them, until at last receiving Holy Baptism, Our Lord in his great mercy despite their intention not being right deigned to illumine for them the true way of salvation. They became such good Christians that today many of them are seen living in the fear of God with much devotion and charity, and without committing any sins, unlike many of us."[33]

Some of the converts from Islam were from among the prisoners the Portuguese had made in their wars with the Moors, both on sea and land. For speaking of the havoc caused by the Portuguese crusade among Muslims on the coasts of Gujarat, Konkan, Malabar, and even Arabia, Zaynu'd-Dīn, an Arab writer of the sixteenth century, exclaims in his *History of the Portuguese in Malabar*: "Oh, how many women of distinction were captured by them and violated till they bore them Christian sons, enemies of the Faith of God and so hurtful to Muslims! How many gentlemen, men of science as well as chiefs, were captured by them and maltreated till they died! How many true Muslims, men as well as women, were converted to Christianity!"[34]

The Governorship of Albuquerque (from November 9, 1509 to December 6, 1515) was a turning-point in the development of the Portuguese power in India. With the conquest of Goa in 1510 the Portuguese were firmly established in the country and could dictate terms to the princelings on the West Coast. The Church profited by this increase in the power of the Portuguese. It was not long before the ban on conversion to Christianity was lifted in fact, if not in law, both at Cochin and Cananore, and people from all castes began joining the church.

[33] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 625.

[34] Zaynu'd-Dīn, *Historia dos Portugueses no Malabar* (*MSS* Arabe do Seculo XVI, tr. David Lopes), p. 46.

The movement was signalized by the conversion of the Arel of Cochin with all his family and kindred, numbering more than one thousand souls. The Arel was the head of the Macuas, who were fishermen, boatmen and sailors. He had influential relatives in other kingdoms holding similar positions, and they were all resolved to follow his example.[35] The rajah of Cochin was incensed by the action of the Arel. He summoned him to his presence, reprimanded him severely, and withdrew from him the privileges and honours which he had conferred upon him previously, while he caused the men who had followed the Arel into the church to be scourged. But nothing could make these men renounce the Faith which they had embraced.[36] The Portuguese captain Duarte de Lemos thereupon restored to the Arel the selfsame privileges and honours in the name of the king of Portugal, and admitted him along with his brothers and relatives to the dignity of Portuguese *fidalgos*.[37]

At the time of this incident Albuquerque was absent at Aden. On his return to Cochin, the rajah sent for the Arel, who was all along living in disgrace. The rajah asked him in great secret what he should do to make Albuquerque come to his palace. Albuquerque then paid a visit to the rajah and the Arel was restored to his favour. In the meanwhile the Portuguese Factor at Cochin had written to the king of Portugual about the incident and had requested him to bring his influence to bear on the rajah to stop him from persecuting the Christian converts.[38] The king wrote to the rajah to relent, and the rajah in his reply explained to the Portuguese monarch that the Arel had incurred his displeasure not because he had become a Christian, but because he had failed to inform him of the step he was going to take. He, however, assured D. Manuel that all would be well and that the Arel and his men would have nothing to fear on that score.[39]

The dispute having thus been settled in favour of the Christians, the prestige that accrued to the church induced respected members of the Nair nobility, the Panikkars, to seek conversion to the Christian Faith. The Panikkars were teachers of the art of warfare

[35] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 212-13.
[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 116-17.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 76.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 170, letter of the rajah to the king.

and enjoyed a high social status. An invitation or a small gift on the part of the Portuguese governor was now enough for them to ask for baptism. And they brought with them all their Nair dependents.[40] As a high official wrote to the Portuguese crown:

> If Your Highness desires that many people should turn Christian, order some gifts to be given to some of the chief men, because when they are converted, the lower people will emulate their example. This can be negotiated with little trouble, as each one here has his price.[41]

But the problem was how to keep these Nairs in the Faith. They were all men of some chief who had them in his pay, and excepting the profession of arms they had hardly any other means of livelihood.[42] In fact the Nair converts had already become a burden on the Portuguese Factory. They were now living in the European quarter of Cochin and had to be maintained by the Factor in conformity with their custom on half a *fanam*[43] a day.[44] While those of the Nairs that had departed to their homes after their baptism had lapsed into practices of their pre-Christian days.[45]

Conversions were on the increase also at Cananore, the other Portuguese settlement on the Malabar coast. According to a report submitted to the king on December 27, 1514, there were in all 344 new converts that year. Of these 85 were Muslims (both men and women), 7 were Nairs, and 160 belonged to the humbler castes of Tiyas and Macuas, the rest being children.[46]

It has to be acknowledged that the poorer converts were attracted to Christianity mainly because of the relief that was given to them by the church. As early as 1509 the king had ordered that this relief should be administered every month to the poor Christians in Cochin, both Portuguese and local converts as well as children, to the extent of 9,000 *reis*,[47] the distribution being done by the

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 226.
[43] A gold coin worth Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$ to Rs. 4. Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 348.
[44] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 117.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 254-55.
[47] A rupee was exchanged for 400 *reis*. Yule and Burnell, *op. cit.*, p. 758.

two religious.[48] The sum indeed looks very small in terms of the rupee, which is legal tender in India at the present day. But in those days of cheap prices a *real* went a long way in helping the poor to procure for themselves some of the bare necessities of life. As Father Allonso Velho, the Vicar of Cananore, observed in his letter to the king :

> The alms which Your Highness had ordered to be given every week is of great service to God, because there are so many children here that it is said the mothers kill them as they have nothing to feed them.[49]

This practice of distributing small change among the poor was later replaced by distribution of rice, which was done every Sunday by the Vicar at the door of the church. In Cananore, for which station we are fortunate to have figures,[50] it amounted to eighteen *fardos*[51] a month. "Many convert themselves on account of this charity," wrote Ayres da Gama to the king in January 1519, "because as Your Highness knows, the people of India are generally very poor and this charity helps them to pull on."[52] Strangely enough, the practice was not started in Goa till 1519,[53] when by the orders of the king alms were given to the converts according to each one's needs by the *Provedor* and members of the religious society, the "Misericordia."[54]

The old motive of the conversions however continued to hold its ground in Malabar, where many a woman sought conversion to Christianity just to marry the Portuguese soldiers. "Most of the persons that become Christians are women," said Pedro Mascarenhas in his report, "it is because of the greater security of life, and because they earn much money among us. The others are mostly petty vendors of provisions and such other things which they bring here to sell. As they are well treated, they become Christians."[55] In fact in the role of women married to the Portu-

[48] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 69-70.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 242, dated December 20, 1514.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 272.
[51] One *fardo* was equal to forty-two Portuguese pounds in weight.
[52] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 372.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 354.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 360.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 225, dated December 7, 1514.

guese in Cochin—which has come down to us—Malabarians, both Hindu and Muslim, outnumber the rest.[56]

To these Christian colonies at Cochin and Cananore exemption was secured by Albuquerque from the criminal jurisdiction of the State. Accordingly, it was agreed that when a Christian, new or old, committed an offence he should be handed over to the Portuguese Captain of the place, and when a Hindu or a Muslim committed an offence in the Christian quarters he should be made over to the local authorities for trial.[57]

At this juncture Albuquerque received instructions from D. Manuel that he should encourage the Hindus and the Christians to build a mercantile marine of their own with a view to wrest shipping altogether from the hands of the Muslims. The Muslims were the sworn enemies of Christianity, and the two religions were outbidding each other in their efforts to secure the allegiance of the Hindus. In the considered opinion of some of the high officials, the conversions to Islam were mainly on the part of a section of the population that desired to take to seafaring as a profession. If only the Portuguese could succeed in breaking the navigation of the Muslims, the tide would turn against Islam and flow in favour of Christianity.[58]

The proposal, however, did not commend itself to Albuquerque, who was above all a practical man of affairs. In a reasoned memorandum which he submitted to the Crown, he explained his views on the subject. He wrote :

> All the gentoos (Hindus) of the land are favoured by me and well treated in their person, ships and merchandise wherever they may be found. But the gentoos are of a weak constitution, and the Christians of the land have little capital to be able to finance in such a short time a fleet of the type which the (mercantile) companies of the Moors possess in India. These Moors are rich and have large capital resources. Their dealings are on a colossal scale and they have a large fleet of merchantmen. The gentoos have always been favoured by me and they will always be, and above all the Christians of these lands. But it does not appear to me that we shall achieve the result by

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 232-39.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 371.

means of a fleet. Of course, if the Moors had dwelt in the land separately by themselves from the Hindus and vice versa, then the course you suggest could have redounded to the latter's benefit. As it is, however, the Moors have their settlements and colonies in the best ports of the gentoos. They have many ships and carry on a brisk trade, and the gentoo kings are on intimate terms with them on account of the profits they make every year. In fact, the Banyas of Cambaya who are the chief gentoo merchants in these countries have all Moors in the ships of their company.[59]

Another proposal of the Portuguese sovereign was that Albuquerque should see if the rajah of Cochin could be induced to embrace Christianity. The rajah had been seated on the throne by Albuquerque after defeating his rival, who had the backing of a powerful party in the state and was supported by the Zamorin of Calicut. It is interesting to note that at the interview between the rajah and Albuquerque, Duarte Barbosa, the author of the very best account of India written by any foreigner, acted as interpreter. Barbosa was then serving in the Portuguese factory at Cochin and knew the local language, Malayalam, well.

Albuquerque told the prince that the king of Portugal bore him great love and affection, and having secured for him the throne, was now desirous of providing for his future salvation. The rajah quickly grasped Albuquerque's meaning and said in reply that Our Lord had agreed that in that strip of land below the mountains —Malabar—the Hindus should live undisturbed according to their customs.

If that were the case, answered Albuquerque, it would have been impossible to come across the name of Jesus Christ in Malabar, or His Cross, or the Christian settlements and churches—knowing that He had suffered to redeem mankind in Jerusalem at a long distance from Hindusthan. Nor could one forget that Our Lord sent His Apostle St. Thomas to this country, and that the latter converted many Hindus to the Faith, and was lying buried in India.

The rajah agreed that it was so, and Albuquerque, continuing, asserted that the customs which the people followed in Malabar were both erroneous and vicious and were fraught with dangers to

[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15.

life here and the salvation of the soul hereafter. He clinched the argument by pointing out that in Malabar no father knew who his son was, nor did the sons inherit from their parents. Their custom in this regard was more appropriate of beasts than of men endowed with reason. They had neither literature nor law, excepting that they washed like the Moors. On the other hand, here was the law of the Christians, delivered by God Himself on Mount Sinai.

The rajah admitted that Albuquerque's contention was true, but said that he was unwilling to make the people suffer by himself turning a Christian. Albuquerque replied that he was astonished at these words. He had always thought that the rajah of Cochin was opposed to these customs. It was not in conformity with them but in opposition thereto that he was feared and obeyed by the people. He was seated on the throne not in compliance with the customs but by the orders of the king of Portugal which had been carried out in obedience to his will. All men desire to pass their inheritance to their children and, Albuquerque concluded, would not object to a religion which put its seal of approval on a natural human wish. Did he not remember how the late rajah, his uncle, had gone with him and Albuquerque to church, and had adored the God of the Christians in his very presence?

After a great deal of reflection, the king replied that the issue did not admit of a quick decision, and had to be considered at leisure. He then asked Albuquerque if he had broached the subject to the rajahs of Calicut and Cananore as well. Albuquerque answered that on account of his great love for him the king of Portugal wished to honour him first with the invitation to embrace Christianity, and showed him the letter the king had written on the subject to the rajah of Cananore. The interview concluded with Albuquerque telling the rajah that in the event of his not coming to a decision, he should leave the Portuguese free to select a prince who would be more agreeable to the king's proposal.[60]

In Cananore and Cochin, the ban on conversions had been virtually lifted during the Governorship of the great Afonso d' Albuquerque. The adjoining state of Travancore followed suit. By the terms of the treaty which the Portuguese concluded on September 25, 1516, the Queen of Travancore allowed her subjects, both Hindu and Muslim, to embrace Christianity.[61] But there was still one

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 228-31.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

great obstacle in the path of the Christian religion. This was that when the untouchables were admitted into the Christian fold, they still laboured under the disabilities attaching to them before their conversion. This was not the case when they converted themselves to Islam. Consequently, in the struggle between the two religions to gain the adherence of these untouchable classes, Christianity was placed at a decided disadvantage as compared to Islam. "Other very low castes can be induced (to convert themselves) with certain liberties," wrote Pedro Mascarenhas to the king on December 7, 1514, "specially if the king of Cochin could be induced to agree that after their conversion no difference is made between them and ourselves, and that they be permitted to touch the Nairs as we do, and go along the public road—which would be a great honour for them. If this could be settled with the king of Cochin, Your Highness could rest assured that many people would turn Christians. But in order to achieve this, it is necessary that Your Highness should write to him. For this is not a light matter such as can be settled with him by any man. You should also order the Capitão Mor (i.e., the governor) that he should insist that this should be done. For it is time that the matter is settled."[62]

Albuquerque, however, was too much occupied with his scheme of empire-building to turn his attention to this small detail. And the hurdle was still there when he died on December 6, 1515. But time was pressing, and it was urgent that something be done about it. And so Father Sebastião Pires, who was then the Vicar of Cochin, wrote to the king in his letter of January 8, 1518 :

> There is a great difference in this country between the degrees and nationalities of people. For they have here the Brahmans and the Panikkars, who belong to honourable classes, and others called Iravas, who are mostly Christians—and Macuas, who are not touched by the higher classes. These on turning Muslims become touchable and enjoy the rights of the honoured classes and go to the king's durbar. But they do not consent to this in the case of these people becoming Christians. Those whom I had converted complained to me that their fellow-men who embraced Islam were more honoured than they who became Christians. I went to the king twice in this connection. And he promised to stop discriminating against Christians. But

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

for fear of the Nairs he has not yet done it. Your Highness should write to him, and he will do it. And then a large number of people will become Christians, because most of them appreciate this elevation in their status.[63]

In 1522 Father Sebastião Pires again reminded the king of his request, praying that he should order the Governor to speak to the rajah regarding the use of the road and other rights. But nothing was done; and in the course of the next few years the position of the Christian converts from the untouchable classes became still worse; and they were made to forfeit their houses and property on embracing Christianity.[64] Eventually, however, the Portuguese monarch seems to have successfully intervened on behalf of the Christian converts, and with the removal of this impediment there were thousands of conversions from the humbler classes.

One such caste was that of the Paravas who inhabited the fishery coast extending over seventy leagues from Cape Comorin to the isle of Manar along the gulf that bears its name. The Paravas plied the trade of pearl-fishing, diving for pearls to the bottom of the deep where they could stay for many hours. The season for pearl-fishing came round once in three years in the months of March and November when, in the absence of the strong winds, they were able to carry on their operations undisturbed—for pearls in March, and for seed-pearl in November. They undertook these expeditions after elaborate preparations consisting of examination and sounding of the ocean. At the spots which they selected for beginning their operations—which were generally in the vicinity of Manar and Tuticorin—there would spring up during the season veritable colonies of these pearl-fishers only to be abandoned at the end of the season.[65]

The Paravas paid a small tax to the state for permission to scour the deep for pearls. In the first quarter of the 16th century, this contribution, which was paid to the Pandyas till then, came to be shared by the two powers between whom the coast was divided —the king of Travancore, Chera Udaya Martanda, who annexed the southern half of the coastal territory and the Vanga Tumbichi

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

[64] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 179, letter of Sebastião Pires to the king, dated January 16, 1528.

[65] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-60.

Nayak, who possessed himself of the north. In 1516, however, the State dues were farmed out by a Muslim who, on account of the profits that he realized, became the virtual master of the coast.[66] According to Barbosa, he was so rich and powerful that all the people of the land honoured him as much as the king. He executed judgement and justice on the Muslims without interference from the constituted authority. The fishers toiled for him for a whole week at the close of the season, and for themselves the rest of the time, except on Fridays when they worked for the owner of the boats.[67]

The Portuguese, who were the masters of the seas, coveted this business and soon wrested it from the Muslims. In 1523, João Froles, whom the Portuguese king appointed as Captain and Factor of the fishery coast, succeeded in farming out the dues of 1,500 cruzados a year.[68] The Muslims would not yield to their rivals without a struggle. But the brunt of their attacks was visited upon the Paravas. For, in their attempt to baulk the Portuguese of their gains they constantly harassed the poor fishers. In consequence, the Portuguese had to maintain a flying squadron to beat off the attacks of the Muslim Corsairs—as they termed their enemies. Just at this juncture Vijayanagar, which had earlier connived at the occupation of the coast by the king of Travancore, and Tumbichi Nayak, vigorously intervened in support of the Pandya king. The Vijayanagar forces inflicted a severe defeat on the Travancore army, and with the appearance of Vijayanagar on the fishery coast there was a cessation of hostilities between the Portuguese and the Muslims.[69]

About the year 1536 an incident occurred which threatened to throw the coastal people into the throes of a violent internecine warfare. In a scuffle between a Muslim and a Parava at Tuticorin, the Parava had his ear torn out by his adversary, who out of sheer greed for the ring it bore, carried it with him. Now there was in the estimation of the Paravas no greater affront than to have one's ears boxed and, much worse, to have the rings torn off. The incident sparked off a civil war between the Paravas and the Muslims, and it was soon apparent that the Paravas would be

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 361.
[67] Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. II, pp. 123-24.
[68] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 778-79, 786-87.
[69] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 362-65.

beaten in the struggle. A Muslim flotilla guarded the coast making it impossible for the Paravas to ply their trade, and offering five *fanams* for a Parava head.[70]

Happily for the Paravas there happened to arrive at Cape Comorin at this time João da Cruz, a horse-dealer, who was high in Portuguese favour. He was a page of the Zamorin, who had sent him to Portugal towards the end of 1512, when he was negotiating a treaty with Albuquerque. He was converted to Christianity while he was there and was admitted to the Order of Christ. He was now no longer in the service of the Zamorin, having incurred his displeasure for changing his religion.

João da Cruz, who was awaiting payment for his deal at the Cape, was approached by the Paravas for advice. Da Cruz could see no way of saving them from their predicament other than conversion to Christianity. For they would then be entitled to the protection of the Portuguese and could, as a matter of right, invoke the aid of the Padroado Portuguese. The Paravas had no alternative but to agree and Da Cruz led a deputation of twenty Pattankattis (leaders) of the Paravas to Cochin to wait on Pero Vaz, the *Vedor da Fazenda*, and Miguel Vaz, the Vicar-General. These pleaded the case of the Paravas before Nuno da Cunha, the Governor, and it was decided that they be helped against their Muslim opponents. Accordingly, a Portuguese squadron appeared before Cape Comorin. The Muslim flotilla sought safety in flight, and the Paravas, freed from bondage, could from now on ply their trade independently of the farmers, both Muslim and Portuguese. In the meanwhile, Da Cruz persuaded the king of Travancore not to object to the conversion of the Paravas in a body to the Christian religion, assuring him that if he was friendly with the Portuguese he could depend on his supply of war steeds, the mainstay of the army in those days. Miguel Vaz thereupon visited the Paravas accompanied by four priests and administered baptism to about twenty thousand people. In a few years the number rose to eighty thousand men, women, and children, and Christianity spread among these people, settled both on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts.[71]

[70] Lucena, *Historia da vida do padre S. Francisco de Xavier*, vol. I, liv. II, cap. VII.

[71] *Ibid.*; *Documentacão*, vol. II, pp. 257-59; Schurhammer, *art. cit.*, pp. 304-07.

The Paravas now had the protection of the Portuguese fleet and could follow their profession undisturbed. Not that the Portuguese were always fair in their dealings with them, and cases were not wanting of extortion on the part of the officials. During the Governorship of D. Estevão da Gama, 1540-42, João Fernandes Correia, the Captain of the fishery coast, who not content with extortion, ordered some Christians to be hanged. Da Gama immediately had him replaced and imprisoned. But the successor having proved no better, Martim Affonso de Souza, the next Governor, dispatched to the fishery coast, in May 1542, Antonio Roiz de Gamboa, a high official, to conduct an inquiry and put an end to the high-handedness of the Portuguese bureaucracy. De Gamboa found the Captain guilty. He compelled him to make restitution for his extortions and took him in chains to Cochin. The Paravas were impressed by the sense of justice of a government which visited condign punishment on its offending officials.

For the protection which they enjoyed, the Paravas contributed seventy-five thousand *fanams* to the Portuguese treasury. This was considered rather exorbitant by Miguel Vaz, on whose representation to the Governor, it was reduced to sixty thousand *fanams*. Miguel Vaz desired that it should be reduced to one-third, a proposal which was beyond the competence of the authorities in India to entertain, as it needed the sanction of the crown.[72]

[72] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-76; *Documentacão*, vol. II, pp. 332-33.

CHAPTER VI

MISSIONS IN GOA AND ON THE KONKAN COAST

I. GOA

THE DISASTROUS DEFEAT of the Turkish armada before Diu by Francisco de Almeida, the Viceroy, toppled the scheme of the Muslim powers to expel the Portuguese from the Indian shores. And the feverish activity of 'Ādil Shāh to retrieve their cause drew the pointed attention of Albuquerque to Goa, where the former was trying to rally the Lascars that had escaped from the disaster of Diu. 'Ādil Shāh had induced the Muslim princes and merchants to subscribe liberally for funds required for the purpose of building a new fleet to try conclusions which the Portuguese, and there soon began to rebuild in the Goa river, says Duarte Barbosa, "fair galleys and brigantines after our fashion and size, as well as many pieces of ordnance of iron and copper and all other munitions of war needful for the sea, with such a good speed that in a short time a great part of the fleet was ready, as well as many great storehouses full of all necessaries in great perfection."[1] This formidable armament so far emboldened the 'Ādilshāhi Lascars that they now began to dispute the sovereignty of the seas with the Portuguese by coming into the open and seizing the ships sailing with Portuguese passports.[2] Albuquerque was thus compelled to pick up the gauntlet and take possession of a city which, owing to its position, was destined by nature to be a metropolis of an empire.

The provocation caused by the warlike preparations of 'Ādil Shāh apart, it was the geomorphological character of Goa that must have mainly commended itself to Albuquerque. From the island of Salsette, near Bombay, to as far south as Calicut, Goa was the only region where the Western Ghats admitted of an opening which could be used as a pass to the rich hinterland of the Deccan. Beginning from the latitude of Poona there is a steady lowering in the altitude of the Sahyadris, as the Western Ghats are called, until

[1] Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, pp. 176-77. [2] *Ibid.*

the north-west zone of Goa, where they suffer a sudden depression which extends from the valley of the Zwari to Karwar. From Karwar again they continue to gain in altitude until they attain their maximum height in the Nilgiris. The passage through the Western Ghats along the territory of Goa led by easy transition to the highlands of Hubli and Dharwar and from thence to the plains and the basin of the Krishna.[3] Albuquerque believed that the Portuguese could, through this passage, attempt in due course the reduction of the Bahamanī kingdoms and Vijayanagar. As he wrote to D. Manuel on December 22, 1510:

> Even if you are to lose what we have elsewhere in India, which may God forbid, from Goa it could be possible for you to recover it and reconquer, and if it pleases Our Lord, the path would be opened by which, in a short while, your people could enter the kingdoms of the Deccan (Bijapur) and the Narsinga (Vijayanagar), because Muslim forces are not formidable by themselves if they are not swelled by the Hindus who join them in war, being their subjects. The gentoos are of an inquiring mind and so, if only a Portuguese Captain could be found who would give them a liberal scale of pay, a hundred thousand infantry could be assembled with their numbers.[4]

The fact that Goa possessed the best harbour in India was another factor in its being selected as the capital by a maritime power like Portugal. Goa at this time was a port of call for ships hailing from countries on either side of the Arabian Sea—Aden and Hormuz, Gujarat and Malabar.[5] There were merchants of many nationalities settled in the city. Horses were the chief item of its commerce. These were imported from all the kingdoms of Arabia Petrea, from Hormuz, from Persia, and the kingdom of Gujarat, and a large number of dealers from the kingdoms of the Deccan, like Vijayanagar and Golkonda, resorted there to buy them. The ones from Hormuz were worth three hundred cruzados apiece (a cruzado being equivalent to 6s. 9d.), and the duty of forty cruzados apiece brought to the exchequer a revenue of 40,000

[3] Silva-Telles, "Goa—Estudo de Geomorphologia," *Boletim da Segunda Classe*, vol. IV, pp. 86-87.

[4] *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque*, t. I, pp. 28-29.

[5] Dames, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

ducats.[6] In return the merchants took back to their countries calico, fine muslin, rice, areca, and betel.[7]

Goa was specially noted for its shipyard for which it had excellent facilities. The forests of the Western Ghats in the vicinity furnished a plentiful supply of timber and the Goan craftsmen were celebrated for their skill and ingenuity.[8] Goa had the largest number of ships which plied to distant places. They were esteemed and favoured everywhere. The seamen who manned them were worthy heirs of the noble seafaring traditions of the Konkan coast.[9]

The surrounding country was exceedingly fertile and it was the veritable granary of the west coast. Caravans of oxen daily poured into Goa, loaded with merchandise from very distant kingdoms in the interior, and rice was taken from there to other places. Its betel and areca were more enjoyable than those grown elsewhere. Goa possessed famous orchards and spas known for their therapeutic qualities, so that it was usual for the Rumes and other white people to go "to the kingdom of Goa to enjoy the shade of the groves of trees and to savour the sweet betel."[10] The territory, possessing as it did land yielding rich crops, brought in a large income to the treasury and the huge volume of maritime trade also went to swell the state revenue.[11]

The city was large and had beautiful mansions. It was girt by a strong wall which was defended at intervals with towers and bastions. And it was the administrative headquarters of the 'Ādilshāhi kingdom of Bijapur. The founder of this kingdom was Yūsuf 'Ādil Shāh who had just died before the seizure of Goa by Albuquerque. There was current in the country a historical romance almost incredible and too good to be real. According to this legend Yūsuf was the son of the famous sultan Amurat I of Turkey. When on his death Mahomet II, his son, succeeded him, he was counselled by his partisans to "liquidate" all his kindred. But Yūsuf's mother, getting wind of the plot, entrusted the child Yūsuf to a merchant who took him to Savá, a city in Persia noted for its schools and libraries. It is the custom among the Arabs and Persians to add the name of the place of their origin to their Christian names, and it was thus that Yūsuf came to be styled Savai, corrupted to Sabayo by the Portuguese writers. Yūsuf received his education at this great cultural centre. When he

[6] Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, p. 57. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 57. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 58. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 57. [11] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

was sixteen years old the information of his origin having leaked out, Yūsuf, lest he should be tracked down by the Turkish agents was compelled to leave Persia. Arriving in India he contrived to be sold as a Georgian slave to Khwaja Maḥmūd Gāvān, the chief minister of Muhammad Bahamanī, the ruler of the Deccan. He soon made his mark by his wide culture and driving personality, and he rose to be a general of the cavalry with the title of 'Ādil Khān. He put himself at the head of the party of foreigners, the *Afaqui*, as against the party of native nobles, the *Dakhni*, which was headed by Nizām-ul-Mulk. During the weak rule of Maḥmūd Bahamanī, son of Muhammad, power having passed into the hands of his rival, Yūsuf 'Ādil Khān retired to Bijapur. He fortified his *jagir* and extended it by conquest and at an opportune moment, when he thought himself sufficiently powerful, he had the name of the sultan scored off from the Khutbah and had his own name read out instead, and assumed the style of Shāh. The governor of the *subha* of Goa, Malik-en-ul-Múlk Gilláni, having acknowledged his sovereignty, Goa was annexed to the 'Ādilshāhi dominions.[12] He was so captivated by the beauty of the place that he not only loved to sojourn there but also toyed with the idea of making it his capital. Persons entering the city were required to give details to the guards regarding their domicile and the reasons for their visit to the city, as also their names and their marks of identification, which details were duly entered in the register.[13] Owing to its importance, Goa enjoyed the pride of place in the ranking of governors, the seniormost official in the cadre being appointed for the post. The governor was assisted by a Captain with a large force under him.

Keen observer as he was, Tomé Pires, who passed through Goa soon after its conquest, could not but be struck by the language of the people which was distinct from the languages spoken in the hinterland—Marathi in the Deccan, and Kannada in the kingdom of Vijayanagar :

> The language which is spoken in this kingdom is Konkani. . . . It does not resemble that of the Deccan nor that of Narsinga (Vijayanagar), but is a separate language.[14]

[12] Ferishta-Briggs, vol. III, pp. 4-7.
[13] Dames, *loc. cit.*
[14] Cortesão, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

Konkani, like Marathi and Gujarati, was the result of the impact of the Magadhan Prakrit, which was the *lingua franca* of the Mauryan empire on the Dravidian languages spoken in the various parts of their dominions in the west and in the south.

Though the political power had passed to the Muslims, the Hindus, being sons of the soil, were practically masters of the entire territory. As Tomé Pires observes :

> There are great many heathens in this kingdom of Goa, more than in the kingdom of the Deccan. Some of them are very honoured men with large fortunes ; and almost the whole kingdom lies in their hands, because they are natives and possess the land and they pay the taxes. Some of them are noblemen with many followers and lands of their own, and are persons of great repute, and wealthy, and they live on their estates, which are very gay and fresh.[15]

This class was evidently that of the Kshatriyas. As for Brahmans, the traveller says that they were greatly revered throughout the country and belonged to many sub-castes :

> There are some very honoured stocks among these Brahmans. Some of them will not eat anything which has contained blood or anything prepared by the hand of another.

As among the Kshatriyas, so among the Brahmans, there were a rich and a poor class, the rich ranking as great lords and the poor being employed to carry letters and merchandise.[16]

Tomé Pires was impressed by a noteworthy trait of the Goan character :

> No torment will make the people of the kingdom of Goa confess to anything that they have done. They can bear a great deal, and when they are being tortured with different tortures they will die rather than confess anything they have made up their minds to keep to themselves.[17]

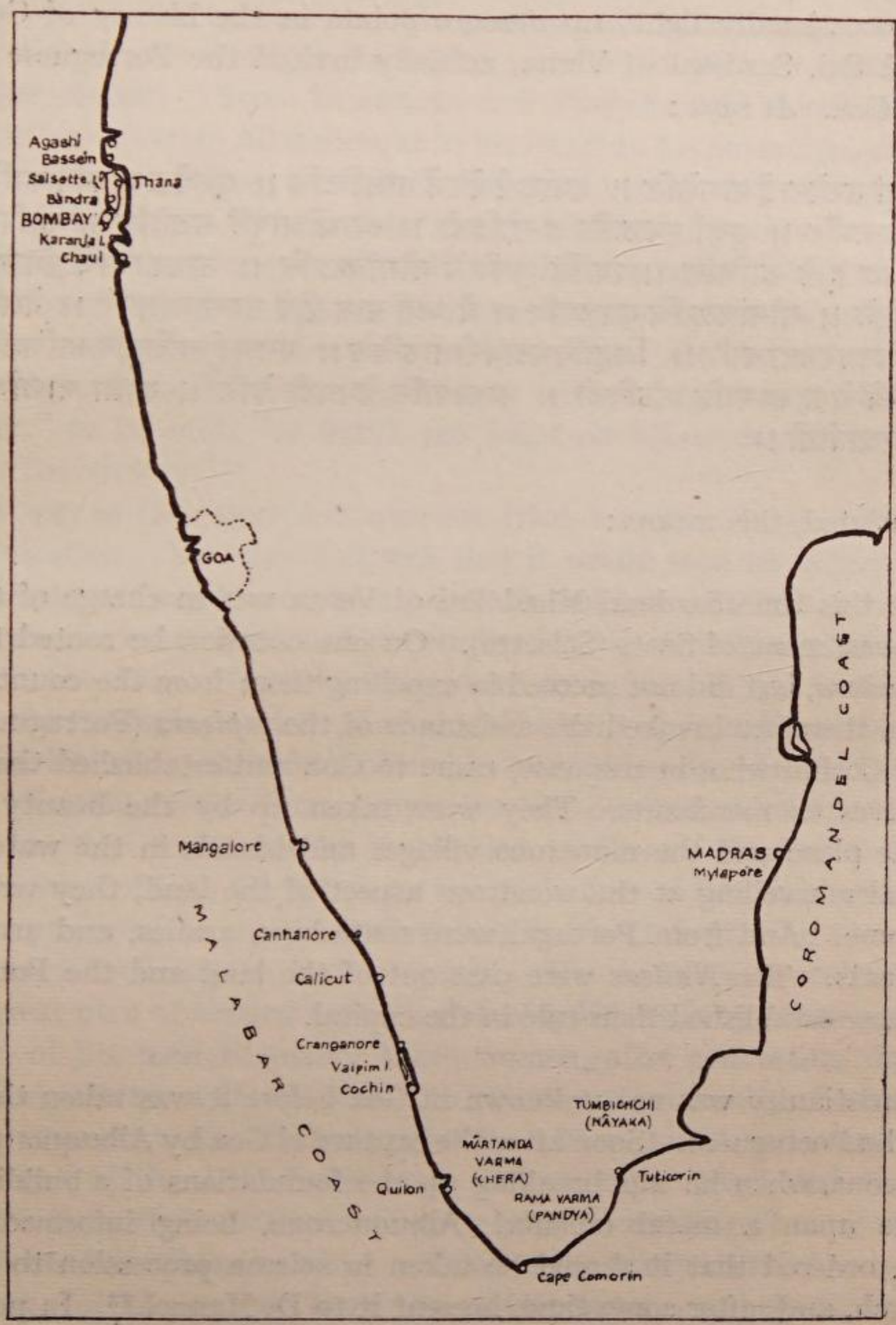
The Muslims, many of whom were men of distinction, lived in the city as a rule and were generally of foreign origin. A large

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 59. [16] *Ibid.* [17] *Ibid.*

proportion of these Muslims consisted of *Naiteas* or *Navayats*, who were of Arabian origin. They were mostly those who had escaped from the slaughter of the Muslims which the emperor of Vijayanagar had ordered his feudatory, the king of Honavar, to carry out in the Hegira year 927 i.e., A.D. 1479, at Honavar and Bhatkal. They mainly traded in horses, the supply of which eventually became their monopoly. The *Naiteas* now began to give preference in this trade to the Muslim powers of the Deccan, a procedure which proved detrimental to the interests of Vijayanagar, which depended on the regular supply of war-steeds for the success of their campaigns against them.[18] The survivors of this massacre fled to Goa which, ten years previously, had been captured from Vijayanagar by the Bahamanī minister Maḥmūd Gāvān. Under their leader, Mallik Hussain, they settled on the Mandovi which supplanted, in due course, the old city of the Kadambas on the Zwari as the capital.[19]

Once they had made themselves secure in Goa, the *Naiteas* began to divert to this port the merchandise and specially the horses which, as before, they started supplying to the Muslim powers. The result was that few ships went to Honavar and Bhatkal, which ports were starved of the flourishing trade they once enjoyed. In consequence, the king of Honavar built a fleet and placed it under the command of four of his best chieftains whose duty it was to compel all ships bound for Goa to put into these ports. If these ships resisted, they were pillaged and made to suffer whatever damage there was within their power to inflict. The result was that there was no love lost between the king of Honavar and the sultan of Bijapur, leading to constant friction between the two. This accounts for the fact that the king of Honavar made common cause with the Portuguese, and Timmoja, his admiral at this time, gave valuable assistance to these latter in the seizure of the city. It would also appear that some leading Hindus did not take kindly to the Bahamanī rule, as they were despoiled of their property. They withdrew to their mountain fastnesses and during the assault on Goa by the Portuguese they descended on the coast, were of great assistance to the Portuguese, possessed themselves of the passes and roads, and put to death all the Muslims that tried to escape through these passes.[20]

[18] Barros, Decada I, liv. VIII, cap. X, pp. 279-80.
[19] Barros, Decada II, liv. V, cap. I, p. 435.
[20] *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque*, t. I, p. 27.



Outline map of the Konkan, Malabar, and Coromandel coasts.

There was often friction between the Hindus and the Muslims as well. According to the *Koṅkaṇākhyana*,[21] a historical poem written in 1721, which gives an account of the Saraswat Brahmans and occasionally lights up obscure points in the history of Goa, Mhad Pai, Sardesai of Verna, actually invited the Portuguese to take Goa. It says :

तेव्हां सरदेसाई मामलेसि ।। दमाड पै वेरणें सासष्टिसि ।। एकवेळ मारूनि काडिले नायल्यासि ।। पुन्हां स्थळासि न सोडिती ।। त्याणें आपुलें सद्यतेसि ।। टोपिकर अविंध होते कोचिसि ।। त्यांसि आणिलें गोमांचळासि ।। सावकारपणें स्थळासि राहिले ।। गोमांचळाचि नवलपरि ।। वेष्टित ग्राम द्वीपें उदकामाझारिं ।। देखोनि अभिनवरचना थोरि ।। लिहोनि पटावरी पाठविले ।। मग पुर्तुकालिंहुनि आणिलीं ।। तारवें सेना सामोग्रि पाठविली ।। नायल्यांसि देशधडी केलि ।। आज्ञा चालविली राजधानीसी ।।

Translated, this means :

> At this time Sardesai Mhad Pai of Verna was in charge of the government of Sasti (Salsette). On one occasion he routed the *Naiteas*, but did not succeed in expelling them from the country. He therefore invoked the assistance of the *topicars* (Portuguese) of Cochin who, in response, came to Goa and established themselves as merchants. They were taken up by the beauty of the place and the numerous villages and islands in the waters, and marvelling at the wondrous aspect of the land, they wrote home. And from Portugal were sent ships, armies, and armaments. The *Naiteas* were cast out of the land and the Portuguese established their rule in the capital.

Christianity was not unknown in Goa before it was taken there by the Portuguese. Soon after the capture of Goa by Albuquerque, someone, when he was breaking up the foundations of a building, came upon a metal crucifix. Albuquerque, being informed of this, ordered that it should be taken in solemn procession to the church, and, after some time, he sent it to D. Manuel.[22] In point of fact, Ibn Batuta who, passing through Goa in 1342, describes earlier settlement of the *Naiteas* on the Zwari, also refers to a

[21] *Koṅkaṇākhyana*, verses 125-28, chap. 8, p. 80. Cf. Pissurlencar, "Colaboradores Hindus de Afonso de Albuquerque," *BIVG*, no. 49, p. 27.

[22] Barros, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-35.

Christian settlement in the neighbourhood. It is possible that it disappeared along with other Christian settlements on the Konkan coast.[23] However, after the successful conquest of the city of Goa by the Portuguese, and the prestige which it brought them, the church attracted to its fold a number of persons from the higher classes. "Some Brahmans and *Naiquebares*[24] have become Christians," wrote Albuquerque in his letter to his sovereign, dated April 1, 1512. "They serve Your Highness loyally and well in this metropolis of Goa."[25] Save for the prohibition of the cruel custom of Sati, Albuquerque wisely left the Hindus undisturbed in the practice of their civic rights. He, however, made over the property of the mosque to the church of St. Catherine. He had caused this church to be built within the fortress with a large compound "in order," as he said, "to thank the Saint on whose day Our Lord gave the victory."[26]

It was in Goa that Albuquerque tried his great experiment in colonization. He knew full well that it would soon be impossible for Portugal, which counted a population of less than two millions, to man the extensive maritime empire he was aiming at establishing in the East. If this empire were to endure, it was essential that the strategic positions, that would be built up from Mozambique to the Moluccas, should be placed in trusted hands. He had won the affection of the Goan people by his excellent administration and the fair treatment he meted out to them. He found that the women of Goa did not share the prejudices of the Nair women (who preferred to marry Brahmans), and were beginning to take an increasing liking for the Portuguese. He, therefore, conceived of his great plan of rearing a population of half-breeds by encouraging some of his men to marry these women, after converting them to Christianity, and settle in the country permanently. Some of these women were Muslims, who had been taken prisoners at the time of the fall of the city. Albuquerque purchased these women from their masters and gave them in marriage to any who wished to have them as wives. He gave the newly married couples a dowry of 18,000 *reas* from the state treasury, to help them in reconditioning the houses and other property which had devolved

[23] Nadvi, "Muslim Colonies in India Before the Muslim Conquest," *IC*, vol. VIII, p. 620.

[24] The caste of Kshatriyas in Goa.

[25] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 152.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

to the state on the flight of the Moors and which, in turn, he gave to his colonists.[27] He wrote to the Portuguese Crown immediately after the capture of Goa :

> Here were taken some Moorish women of fair complexion and good behaviour, and some clean men of good character wish to marry them and settle here in this country. They asked me for the wherewithal . . . I gave them the dowry as ordered by Your Highness, besides presenting each one with his horse, houses, lands and cattle. There will be four hundred and fifty souls. These captured women who are married return to their houses, dig up their jewels, goods, ornaments of gold, pearls and rubies, necklaces, armlets, and rosaries—all of which I gave to them and to their husbands.[28]

Naturally enough, what with the encouragement of the governor and the charm exercised by the rich beauty of these choicest women from the Muslim seraglios, there was a growing number of applications on the part of the Portuguese soldiery for permission to marry the women and settle down. "The marriages are on the increase," reported Albuquerque to his king on April 1, 1512, "because many well-to-do men are marrying—officials, smiths, carpenters, turners, bombardiers, as also some Germans. And I believe that they will not quit Goa. This year alone more than five hundred were married . . . and there be so many among the servants of Your Highness and of the Dukes and Counts of Portugal in Goa eager to marry that Your Highness will hardly believe such a thing."[29] João de Barros relates that on one occasion when the clamour of the *gente baixa*, the low-class soldiery, to take local wives had reached its peak, Albuquerque decided on a quick dispatch of the nuptials and invited the couples for the ceremony to the governor's palace. It happened, however, that after the nuptials, in the general confusion occasioned by the large crowds and dim light, the bridegrooms, looking for their brides in the dark, took the wrong ones with them. When they discovered the mistake the following morning, they took the true women they had married without much ado, satisfied that, in the matter of honour, each had return-

[27] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada II, liv. V, cap. XI, pp. 559-60.

[28] *Documentacão, loc. cit.*

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.

ed the other *tal por tal*, measure for measure.[30]

The Hindus of Goa, whose daughters Albuquerque had taken and given to his soldiers and officers, were at first scandalized and aggrieved by this proceeding, which had indeed in it an appearance of force. But they soon found their daughters enriched with property and treated as honoured wives and they themselves rising in the social scale, and were content to see them well settled.[31] Albuquerque had these marriages publicized by letters, which in those days took the place of newspapers, in order to prevent the men from living in sin with these women. As he wrote to the king of Portugal:

> Without my permission many women are taken from Goa by men who keep them, because I give no woman to any one, except on condition that if he wished to marry her he should give her something and that no one should take them away from Goa without my permission.[32]

But critics were not wanting among high-placed Portuguese officials, who looked askance at this experiment on the part of Albuquerque to provide the settlements with men who could be depended upon. One of these officers wrote to the king on December 15, 1512:

> Your Highness should not believe that the householders (*casados*) who are married here, are among those whom you would approve. If I understand rightly, you wanted alliances with the people of the land; but so far there have been no marriages, save those of vicious men and villains who marry their captive slaves and are admitted to the privileges and honours reserved for those marrying the native women. The others are desperados, who are not allowed to leave for Portugal and are ill-treated. They marry and in a couple of days desert to the Moors with their wives or without them, or the wives without them.[33]

Albuquerque defended himself against his detractors by ordering a judicial inquiry into the quality of his own women captives, whom he had thus given in marriage. And it was proved that

[30] Barros, *op. cit.*, pp. 560-61.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 560.
[32] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 151.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

they would any day fetch more than two thousand *cruzados* in the slave markets. Albuquerque wrote to the king that he had given them free to those among the gentry that wished to marry them, because it was not in keeping with the dignity of his office "to sell, exchange or make partition or incite quarrels for his own profit."[34] "I have never permitted these men," Albuquerque added, "to marry the Malabar women, because they are *negras corrutas* in their way of life. The Moorish women on the other hand are beautiful and of high class and live in seclusion, as is the custom among the Moors in this country. So also are the Brahman women and their daughters. They are of a high class, well-behaved, good-looking and of fine presence. And thus it is that whenever a fair woman is taken, she is neither sold, nor freed, but is given in marriage to a man of good character, who wishes to have her."[35] And to confound his enemies all the more he selected the very best among his colonists and appointed them to the most responsible posts in the government of Goa, such as those of aldermen (*vereador*), inspectors of the markets (*almotaceis*), judges, mayors (*alcaides*), and so forth.[36] He wrote to the king :

> Should it perchance be necessary to order the expulsion of the natives of the island (of Goa), I shall give the lands and offices to the householders who have taken Indian wives, because the lands of Goa are not the patrimony of any one but the King, who is the lord of the territory. All others, workers and people, are rentiers, and they rent out the lands and trees.[37]

It is not possible to deliver a judgement on Albuquerque's policy in encouraging mixed marriages. The progeny of these marriages served the purpose for which they had been called into being. Diogo Mariz wrote to the king on November 13, 1529 :

> In the City (of Goa) there are nearly eight hundred inhabitants, most of whom are servants of Your Highness—*fidalgos*, *cavalheiros*, *escudeiros* and their children besides other men of merit and service and other honoured people. And in this City there are about 1,000 Portuguese children. Many of them will take to the profession of arms in future and serve Your Highness ;

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 220.
[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 220-21.
[36] Barros, *op. cit.*, p. 563.
[37] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 152.

and pleasing God, will be experts in war, because they are born in it and are nurtured in it.

These words proved prophetic. The children on reaching manhood joined the army and the fleet and distinguished themselves in the wars of the governors and viceroys—Nuno da Cunha, Pedro Mascarenhas and others. Further, enjoying as they did a privileged position, they constituted a most influential section of the population of the metropolis, and when Goa attained to the position of a royal city and a Corporation or Senate, as it was called, was established there, they dominated this body and made themselves a power in the land. For when a measure was proposed by the executive, it was necessary for the latter to consult the Senate and obtain its approval. Furthermore, as a result of their intimate contact with the people, they were in a position to bring a sense of sanity and reality into the counsels of the Government, making bold on one occasion, when the latter was hard put to it to raise a loan, to observe to D. João III that he could not expect the Hindus to subscribe while he sought to apply in his dominions the wicked principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*.[38]

These inter-racial marriages apart, conversions must have been few and far between in Goa during this early period. Nevertheless, the friars went about the island trying to induce the people to accept the new faith. Friar Antonio reports to the king, in his letter of November 4, 1518, that one of the friars had erected crosses in the Hindu temples in the island and that the people had assured him that they had already become Christians. He, however, adds the further piece of information that they had also told the friar that he should not come to them any more.[39] The fact seems to have been that these people wanted to be left alone, and the friars on their part, had not as yet gone beyond the stage of sounding them as regards their attitude towards the Christian Faith.

Four years later, when the Bishop of Dume, one of the earliest bishops to be sent to the East, visited Goa, he found a number of Hindu temples in the island. The annual feasts which were celebrated in these temples with great éclat were attracting large

[38] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 188; Ficalho, *op. cit.*, p. 172. Cavalheiro means gentleman, and escudeiro means valet.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 354.

crowds from the City—among whom were the Portuguese themselves and the new converts. The bishop, who was scandalized by the presence of Christians at these gatherings, recommended a change in the Portuguese religious policy. He suggested that the temples should be pulled down and churches erected in their place. His next suggestion was that the government should declare that none but Christians would be permitted to live in Goa. The Hindus had property in the island and the bishop had no scruples whatsoever to insinuate that faced with the choice between Christianity and expulsion, there would be no hesitation on their part to choose the former alternative, since they had no other means of livelihood besides their property. For the bishop the end, indeed, justified the means, and if they themselves were not capable of becoming good Christians, their children would be—and God will be served! The bishop believed that it was the easiest thing in the world to convert the Hindus: "They have no difficulty in becoming Christians, but for the respect for their dead on account of an old custom in which they no longer believe, nor do they worship anything."[40] Indeed, the deep religiosity of the Hindu had been lost on this casual visitor.

The bishop felt that if Christianity was making tardy progress it was because the Hindus were scandalized by the ungodly lives of the Portuguese. According to him, the land changed the national traits and qualities of the Portuguese that went there, who, after misappropriating what belonged to the state would justify their conduct saying, "Why did we come here if not to earn?"[41] Again, greatest disorder reigned in family life. "I saw in Goa," he wrote, "and I also know it for certain in Cochin that many a wife is separated from her husband with false witnesses, I myself saw a person married three times and separated from the ones he had married three times. Persons can be easily induced here to give false witness for one *tanga*, which is equivalent to sixty *reis*. With the testimony of such witnesses some Vicar separates them at once which causes great confusion in the church besides giving bad example to the people of the country who are Christian.[42]

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 452-53. [41] *Ibid.*, pp. 445-46.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 448. Fr. Sebastião Pires reported to the king that "in 1521 five or six marriages had been annulled (in Goa), among which was (the case) of a Portuguese woman who had been married three times and whose marriage had been declared void three times." *Ibid.*, p. 441.

Finally, among the Portuguese, the married as well as the bachelors, were living in concubinage.[43]

"Many of the fidalgos here live publicly in a state of fornication," wrote Friar Vicente Leguna to the king, in his letter of September 25, 1530. "Every time I preach I tell them what I feel, and this (their way of life) is little service done to God and to You. This state of affairs must be remedied. Again, married men here take their slaves for fornication, and for this reason there is great dissoluteness among the Christians."[44] And continuing, he wrote "there are in this city of Goa and in Cochin many men who are married in Portugal and are once again married here. Specially in Goa there are more than twenty. Your Highness should order an inquiry into the cases of those who are married in Portugal so that they may go back to their wives. Then there are others who have been here for fifteen or twenty years, while their wives and children are in Portugal dying of hunger and they don't want to go. Your Highness should order them to depart, because they render no service except carrying on trade, and are deserters from the fleet."[45]

Nothing, however, seems to have been done to improve the situation which actually went from bad to worse when Bishop Vaqueiro visited India in 1532. "There is great damage done to the consciences of married men here and there in Portugal by the fact that they are married and separated every day. Married men are also seen fornicating here and there. It is sometime that I gave a list of these to the governor so that he may order them to embark, as Your Highness has instructed in the rescript given to me."[46]

There was yet another cause that retarded the progress of the church in places like Goa where the Portuguese had established a state and where Christianity should have flourished. Strangely enough, in Goa most of the Christian converts were treated as captives. "No sooner do they receive the waters of Baptism," said Sebastião Pires, the Vicar-General, in his letter to the king, of December 16, 1527, "than they are persecuted and treated with disfavour. If I were not here they would have been treated worse. For when I see some harm has been done them, I go to the Captains that favour them, and do them honour."[47] Earlier, the bishop of Dume, reporting on the same matter, had observed :

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 445.
[44] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 195-96.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 195.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

Many of the non-Christians that turn to our Catholic Faith are captured and enslaved, seeing that they become Christians. Many do not. The dictum of the sacred Canon is that non-Christians who flee to our Faith should be free. Why should they be enslaved? For this reason there are not many conversions every year.[48]

Despite these drawbacks, however, Christianity did register some extension in Goa. The year 1526 witnessed the conversion of a whole village in the island. A church was built at the place, and the people catechized in the articles of the Faith.[49] In 1529, the number of converts in the City itself had risen sufficiently. It was felt that they should be given a separate parish with a chaplain to look after their spiritual welfare, and the suggestion was made that, since most of them resided in the suburbs, the church of Our Lady of the Rosary, which was there, or that of St. Anthony close to it, could be set apart for them.[50]

II. CHAUL

Chaul was the sole port of the kingdom of Ahmadnagar which Nizām-ul-Mulk, the rival of Yūsuf 'Ādil Shāh, helped his son to carve for himself during the disintegration of the Bahamanī kingdom. Nizām-ul-Mulk, who thus became the progenitor of the dynasty called after his name, is reputed to have had a career as incredibly romantic as that of Yūsuf 'Ādil Shāh. Born of Brahman parents, he had been captured in his infancy by the forces of Ahmad Shāh Bahamanī, into whose household he was admitted as a slave. Ahmad Shāh was so impressed by the intelligence of the boy that he had him converted to Islam and, changing his name from Timmappa to Hasan, he appointed him companion to his eldest son, prince Muhammad. Hasan thus received the best intellectual training that could be had anywhere in the country. He rose to high offices in the state and was dignified by the title of Ashraf Humāyūn Nizām-ul-Mulk.[51] During the weak rule of Muhammad, he made himself the absolute master of the Deccan, but paid the penalty for his complicity in the murder of Maḥmūd Gāvān, the great minister who had befriended him, by a similar fate at the hands

[48] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 19 .
[49] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 142.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[51] Ferishta-Briggs, vol. III, p. 190.

of those whom he had raised and protected.[52] His son, Ahmad, succeeded to his title as well as to his dominions and, declaring himself independent, established himself at Ahmadnagar under the style of Ahmad Nizām Shāh. It is, therefore, not surprising that Ahmad Nizām Shāh eagerly grasped the hand of friendship extended by the Portuguese so soon after their arrival in India. The Portuguese were looking for a friendly place on this part of the west coast and found in the maritime city of Chaul both a hospitable road where their ships could come to anchor and an international mart where they could exchange their wares for the famed commodities of the East. They were permitted to build a factory and were expected, in return, to render help to Ahmadnagar against its enemies, especially Bijapur and Gujarat.

Ahmad Nizām Shāh died in 1508, leaving his kingdom to his infant son, Burhan. Happily for Ahmadnagar, its interests were safe in the hands of his minister, Mukammal Khān, who combined in himself the qualities of a consummate general and skilful statesman. Under his direction, Burhan was educated with care, and Ferishta affirms that he once saw in the royal library a treatise on *The duties of kings* written in Burhan's own hand. When he grew up and assumed the reigns of government, Burhan desired to make his court the centre of wit and wisdom in the land by inviting to it scholars from various countries which opened the way to the establishment of the friendliest relations with the Portuguese. Burhan had in his service Sancho Pires, a Portuguese, whc rose to the rank of general, and the occasional visits to the Ahmadnagar court of the famed Portuguese physician of the times, Garcia da Orta, helped to promote mutual understanding between the two powers.

In 1528 the Portuguese assisted Burhan to repel the attack of the sultan of Gujarat, and sent out a fleet to Chaul. On this occasion Lopo Vaz, the governor, himself rushed to the defense of Chaul and, pursuing the enemy fleet which was sailing towards Diu, he engaged it off the island of Bombay and succeeded in destroying half its vessels.[53] Burhan was grateful for this service and shortly after permitted the Portuguese to build a fort at Chaul.[54] In 1539, he signed an agreement with D. Garcia de Noronha, the viceroy, which has been aptly described as a treaty of peace and extradition.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

[53] Danvers, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 387.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 403.

It was stipulated in this treaty that criminals taking refuge in the territories of the high contracting parties should be mutually surrendered and, what is more striking, given the temper of the times, it contained a clause which guaranteed reciprocal respect for each other's religions, the Portuguese viceroy expressly avowing in so many words that "it will be for the service of the King, my lord, that the mosques should be guarded by the Portuguese and that they should be honoured by the latter as if they were their own churches."[55]

The Portuguese also fixed the quota of war-steeds which Ahmadnagar could directly import from Hormuz, a concession which was highly appreciated by the parties in whose favour it was made. For, besides making a difference to their revenue, it enabled the beneficiaries to import directly the choicest steeds from Arabia and Persia, which steeds lent a dignity all its own to royal pomp and circumstance.[56]

More significant still was the treaty concluded with Burhan Nizām Shāh in 1547 by João de Castro, the Portuguese governor. Under the terms of this treaty the parties bound themselves mutually to help, with all their strength and forces, against whatsoever power which may choose to attack either of them, and undertook not to conclude a separate treaty with 'Ādil Shāh. This was indeed an offensive and defensive alliance, as a result of which Burhan Shãh became, from being merely a good neighbour, the friend and ally of the Portuguese.[57]

The friendship with Burhan was not availed of by the Portuguese to start any missionary activity in the Ahmadnagar dominions. Nor did Burhan, despite his undoubted intellectual curiosity, ask the Portuguese to send any of their divines to his court. It would therefore seem that his flair was only for literature and scientific pursuits, and he did not bother about matters religious. Under these circumstances, Chaul being too small a place for missionary enterprise, the missioners had perforce to confine themselves to social service among their own people. Of the secular priests among them, the documents speak of Fr. Pero Vaz, who was the first Vicar of Chaul. He was succeeded by Fr. Gomes Eanes, who is highly praised by Fr. Sebastião Pires in his letter to the king of December 16, 1527, as having acquitted himself well of his duties, and recommending him to the king in view of his

[55] Ficalho, *op. cit.*, p. 229. [56] *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30. [57] *Ibid.*, p. 230.

impending departure for Portugal.[58] It was however the Franciscans who dominated the whole of the north, and their leader, Antonio do Porto, is reputed to have opened the monastery at Chaul dedicated to St. Barbara, and also constructed a chapel a little after the acquisition of Bassein, dedicated to Our Lady of the Sea. Adjacent to the church and the monastery, the Franciscans erected a tower which was ninety-six feet in height and which must have served as a lighthouse. It is still preserved, though the staircase is in ruins. It is referred to as *satkhani* by the people in the locality and, being on the sea-shore, is washed by the waves at high-tide.[59] There were also a hospital and an orphanage at Chaul built at the same time as the church. The hospital was well supplied with all the necessary remedies for the sick and the wounded in the Portuguese fleet that were landed there.[60] Under the prevailing system, the apothecary shop was auctioned, the basis of the bidding being a rough estimate of the number of patients expected. In 1529, however, Bartholomew Gonsalves having spent more than the amount he had bidden for the shop, he petitioned Afonso Mexia, Captain of Cochin and *Vedor da Fazenda*, that government should make good the loss. Afonso Mexia, having consulted the apothecary of Cochin, granted his request.[61]

III. BASSEIN AND DIU

Ever since their arrival in India the Portuguese had met with a determined opposition from Gujarat. This was one of those provinces whose governors declared themselves independent, taking advantage of the steadily worsening situation of the Delhi sultanate under the Tughluqs, consequent on the invasion of Timur, and its own internal decay. The kingdom grew in importance and power particularly during the reign of Mahmud Bīgaraha whose move, in uniting his naval forces with those of the Mameluke sultan of Egypt, was responsible for the disaster the Portuguese suffered off Chaul. Further successes were scored by his son and grandson Muzaffar Shāh II and Bahadur Shāh. The latter annexed Malwa, proceeded against a Rajput prince Silhadi and attacked Chittor. As his

[58] *Documentacão*, vol. II, p. 142.

[59] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 461; Cunha, *op. cit.*, p. 100. *Satkhani* means seven storeyed.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 94

[61] *Documentacão*, vol. II, pp. 183-85.

attention was being distracted from the war by the harassment of his ports by the Portuguese flotillas, he opened negotiations for a definitive peace with the Portuguese, offering to cede to them the entire territory of Bassein with all its revenues, and to desist from equipping and maintaining any ships of war at his ports. The proposal was acceptable to Nuno da Cunha, the governor, who signed the treaty on December 23, 1534, aboard the galleon *S. Matheus* anchored in front of Bassein, and Bahadur renewed his war on Chittor.[62] But Bahadur had offended Humayun, the Mughal Emperor, in the meanwhile by his unwillingness to surrender a political refugee—Muhammad Zaman Mirza—who, having tried and failed to overthrow Humayun, had sought refuge at his court. Consequently, Humayun invaded Gujarat and, meeting with little or no resistance, made himself master of the kingdom; while Bahadur, fleeing from place to place before the victorious Mughal army, arrived at Diu with a view to escape to Mecca by the earliest boat.[63] But like a drowning man catching at straws, he sent Diogo de Misquita, who was with him at the storming of Chittor, to Martim Afonso, the *Capitao Mor*, to solicit through him the help of Nuno da Cunha.

Martim, who was then at Chaul, felt in sooth that here was a tide in their affairs which, if it was to lead on to fortune, should be taken at the flood. He, therefore, rushed to Diu with no more than forty men on board and without awaiting the orders of the governor to whom he had dispatched Diogo de Misquita. As was expected, Bahadur was willing to have their assistance at any cost to keep off the Mughal peril. He readily consented to permit them to construct their fort on any site that they would select.[64] The Portuguese had long set their hearts on Diu, which was of vital importance for their commercial politics. For with Diu in their possession, they could exercise effective control over trade that passed between Northern India and the straits of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb. A brisk trade was carried on at this port, frequented as it was by ships from Hormuz, Aden, and the African coast, as well as those from the Konkan and Malabar.[65] Secondly, situated at the southern extremity of the peninsula of Kathiawar, it could

[62] Ficalho, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-91.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95; Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India*, p. 354.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96; Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 609-18.
[65] Ficalho, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

be used as an *avant-garde* to watch over the whole of the west coast down to the Cape. Consequently, when after a few days Nuno da Cunha arrived with his fleet at Diu, he was glad to confirm the arrangements and, signing the treaty, which he did on October 25, 1535,[66] he carried out the long-cherished desire of the king, who, when appointing him governor, had impressed on him the urgent necessity of seizing the island.[67]

The territory of Bassein ceded by Bahadur Shāh was a rich tract extending over eight leagues along the coast from the bay of Agashi to the tip of the island of Karanja, and stretching seven to eight leagues inland. The territory is criss-crossed by creeks and islets into which the rivers decending from the Ghats discharge their waters, features which are responsible for dividing the territory into islands. Starting from the north, Bassein, properly so-called, is divided from the mainland by a long and narrow creek which, coming down almost in a straight line from the Vaitarna, takes a sharp bend to the west until it reaches the port of Bassein. A group of islands follow, divided from the mainland by a tortuous canal, the most important among them being Salsette and Bombay. Lastly, there opens out in the south the wide bay of Bombay, in the centre of which is the island of Elephanta, with the island of Karanja lying to its south.

On account of the abundant revenue it yielded to the government, Bassein was called the Court of the North. This revenue was derived from such sources as the *mandavi* or custom house, the *casabas* or villages, and *parganas* or districts. At the custom houses, the custom dues on merchandise imported into the region were collected. In the *casabas*, which were villages of importance, certain classes of people paid an impost to the government in order to be permitted to ply their trade undisturbed. These were the traders in oil and fish, fisherfolk, green-grocers, toddy-tappers, cultivators of sugarcane, milk vendors, shepherds, and weavers. From the *parganas* seem to have been collected taxes from the proprietors of the lands, the inhabitants of the villages, and from workers of other categories.[68]

For administrative purposes the region was divided into eight units :

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 96 ; Felner, *Sabsidios para a Historia da India Portugeza*, p. 220.
[67] Bragança-Pereira, "Os Portuguese em Baçaim," *OP*, nos. 7, 8, 9, p. 99.
[68] Ficalho, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-65.

Saibana de Baçaim	A Ilha de Bella flor de Sambayo
O Caçabé de Tana	A Pragana de Manora
A Ilha de Salcete	A Pragana de Asserim
A Ilha de Caranja	A Ilha de Bombaim

The revenue was actually farmed out. In the beginning it was the entire revenue of the province and, thereafter, the different categories thereof. The tax-farmers often sublet their right to collect taxes to others and these actually collected them from the labourers, who were thus mulcted at two levels.[69]

Bassein was a godsend to the Portuguese government, which immediately started sending families from Goa and elsewhere to settle there. And what with its riches, the region assured the best conditions for an easy life both to the original inhabitants and the newcomers. In a short while the place was changed beyond recognition, thanks to the energy and the enterprise of these early colonizers. The countryside soon covered with gardens and orchards, and the trade which the city attracted brought enormous wealth to its citizens who came to be distinguished by the appellation *Fidalgos de Bacaim*. The city abounded in stately edifices, civil and religious, which latter boasted of five convents, thirteen churches and a *misericordia* or orphanage, in addition to the *matriz* or the Cathedral.[70]

There is a tradition dating the connection of the Franciscans with Bassein from the earliest days of its occupation by the Portuguese. This tradition would also have us believe that the evangelization of Bassein started with Friar Antonio do Porto, the intrepid missioner. At Agashi, he improvised an orphanage or school, naming it after Our Lady of the Assumption. It was destroyed during an attack on Bassein in 1540, by the soldiers of Bahadur, under the command of Bramaluco. The orphanage had been cleared of its inmates in time, but half a dozen stragglers fell into the hands of the enemy. They were called upon to renounce their Faith and on their refusal to do so, were tortured and burnt alive when the enemy set fire to the church in which they had been confined.[71]

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67 ; Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein*, pp. 157-58.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[71] Pauloda Trindade, *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente*, pt. II, p. 444, cited in Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

This tradition, however, needs to be re-stated in the light of the documents recently published, one of which is translated here in full, as it gives welcome information on the conditions prevailing in Bassein at the time. This document is a letter written to D. João III in November 1545, by Fr. Miguel Vaz in which the Vicar-General observes, lamenting the policy of drift in regard to matters religious followed in Bassein :

> Bassein is among the best lands, if not the best, Your Highness possesses on the Indian coast. It has been yielding large revenue for many years. But there is not a single church there, nor yet in the entire territory extending over fifteen leagues or more. Neither are there any means by which we could disabuse our subjects of the errors in which they live; and impress upon them the necessity and obligation of accepting our holy Faith. It seems but right that this work be undertaken by some men who working in that region could wean the people from idolatry and Islam both of which are flourishing there. The best way to achieve this is for Your Highness to build a church, granting the purposes of conversion, two thousand *pardaos* a year from what comes through God's bounty in this territory. Placing this sum in the hands of reliable men to spend on this head and entrusting them with the work, they would be able to do much in your service as well as for the salvation of their neighbours. For until the present a sum of three thousand, which is raised in the name of the factories, is spent for the glory of Muhammad and for maintaining the mosques. This I know from the information which, I think, for the reasons they gave me, to be ccrrect.[72]

The king, however, had already arranged to supply the want of missionary personnel and wrote to the Vicar-General on March 5, 1546 :

> I am sending you in order to assist you in the work for the service of Our Lord and His Faith ten clerics of the Society of Jesus, persons of exemplary virtue, and most fitted for this work among whom are men of letters needed for instructing the converts. In addition to these I am sending six friars of the Order of

[72] *Documentacão*, vol. III, pp. 212-13. A pardão was valued at 360 *reis*.

St. Francis of the Province of Piedade, who are also men of great virtue and exemplary conduct.[73]

The six Franciscans were Fr. Antonio do Porto, Fr. João de Goa, Fr. Domingos, Fr. Peregrino, and Br. Diogo, and the sixth, who is anonymous, is said to have died at Chaul.[74] It follows, therefore, that Friar Antonio do Porto, as he was one of their number, could not have commenced his apostolate before 1546.

But the Franciscan tradition cannot be rejected *in toto* and there are indications of Franciscan missionary effort long before Friar Antonio do Porto set foot on Indian soil. This is clear from a communication to D. João III, in December 1542, from Martim Afonso de Souza, the governor, who complains that despite the express royal orders disallowing the Franciscans from building their friary at Cananore, which they wished to do, they were there already, and he dared not ask them to leave the place, while on the other hand they began to threaten him that they would build two or three more at Chaul, Bassein, and Diu.[75] The fact seems to have been that the Franciscans who were still living under canvas—their dwelling at Agashi is said by Friar Paul da Trindade to have been of canvas and straw[76]—were finding it impossible to rough it out any longer in temporary sheds and, in view of the *non possumus* attitude of the governor, were determined to go their own way. But what they had accomplished so far was mighty little; hence the representation of the Vicar-General to the king that more labourers be sent to reap the harvest.

Nothing could be done during our epoch in the matter of implanting the Christian religion in Diu. The conditions under which the Portuguese were allowed to establish themselves there obliged them to desist from attempting conversions among the Muslims no less than among the Hindus in the island. However, when the fort was built and dedicated to St. Thomas, a church was added to it with provision made for a Vicar and six assistants.[77]

Did the Portuguese chance upon any Christians, descendants of the Nestorian remnant or of the more recent additions made by the Latin mission? The Christians must have been sufficiently

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 259; Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, vol. I, p. 75.
[74] Meersman, *The Franciscans in Bombay*, p. 48.
[75] *Documentacão*, vol. II, p. 309.
[76] Paulo da Trindade, *loc. cit.*
[77] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p 482

numerous in Kalyan in the sixth century for this city to be the seat of a bishopric. In the twelfth century, Yakut reports having seen churches and synagogues at Chaul.[78] But in the Konkan and in Gujarat they never attained to the position of power and affluence enjoyed by their co-religionists in Malabar, in contradistinction to the Muslims, the *Navayats*, who rose high in the estimation of the local rulers, the northern and southern Śilāhāra dynasties, ruling respectively from Thana and Goa. They had established themselves so firmly in the land that they were honourably mentioned, along with other important classes, on all public occasions, in a form of salutation which became traditional in the charters[79] issued by these dynasties :

> अस्मिन्काले प्रवर्त्तमाने स च महामण्डलेश्वर श्रीमत् .....
> सव्वानेव स्वसंबध्यमानकानन्यानपि समागामि राजपुत्रम् पुरोहितामात्यप्रथाना-
> प्रधाननैयोगिकांस्तथा राष्ट्रपतिविषंयपतिनगरपतिग्रामपतिनियुक्तानियुक्तराजपुरुष
> जनपदांस्तथाहंयमननगरपौरत्रिवर्गा प्रभृतींश्च प्रणतिपूजासत्कार समादेशै :
> संदिशत्यस्तु वः संविदितं यथा :

Translated, this means :

> At this current time, he, the Mahāmaṇḍalêśvara the illustrious ... makes a communication, with expressions of salutation and worship and respect to all future sons of kings, counsellors, priests, councillors, ministers, minor ministers and functionaries, both those connected with himself and others too, also to the lords of the country, the lord of the district, the lord of the city, the lord of the village, the *Niyukta*, the *Aniyukta*, the king's men, and the country people, and also to the three classes of citizens, and others, of the corporation Hamyamana.[80]

The *nakhara* or *nagara*, i.e., the corporation referred to in the charters, is none other than the corporation of Arab or Muslim merchants—the Anjumān—phonetically modified in Sanskrit as Hanjamana or Hamyamana to suit its own linguistic necessity.

[78] Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India*, p. 71.

[79] These Charters range from A.D. 988 to A.D. 1129. Cf. Moraes, "The Hamjamana of the Śilāhāra Records," *JBORS*, XXVIII, part 3 (1942), pp. 1-2.

[80] Fleet, "Bhandup Plates of Chittarāja," *EI*, vol. XII, p. 259.

The Portuguese could find no traces of this Christianity in the land in which it had once flourished and which had now come under their occupation, except the curious discovery by Diogo de Couto, the historian, that the story of the Buddha was *mutatis mutandis* the story of Barlam and Josaphat so beloved of the Christian hagiographers. He learnt the story of the Buddha's life for the first time at the Kanheri Caves in Salsette in the course of his investigations into the folklore around the Buddhist settlement. According to the Christian version, St. Thomas, having conversions among the people of India, a Gentile king started persecuting the Christians. After this king had long been childless, one of his queens bore him a son whom he named Josaphat. He called together his astrologers, and they foretold an illustrious future for the child though not as a king. The boy, as he grew up, showed himself to be thoughtful and of a devout turn of mind. And the king, to defeat the prognostications of the astrologers, and fearing that the boy might turn an ascetic, had him brought up in a splendid palace attended by tutors and servants in the flower of youth. No stranger was admitted into the precincts and there he led a sheltered life, totally ignorant of the ills to which the human flesh is heir—poverty, disease, old age, death. But one day the prince, escaping from these narrow confines, encountered a leper and a blind man. On another day, he fell in with a decrepit old man and was sad to learn that no one could escape deterioration and death. At this time Barlam, an eremite of great sanctity and knowledge, contrived to meet the prince and taught him the Christian doctrine and initiated him into monastic life. Efforts were made by the king to induce him to abandon his ideas, but to no avail. The services of a magician were requisitioned, but the prince overcame through prayer, all seductive blandishments. At last the king gave up his opposition, associated the prince with himself in the government, and was himself converted, and died after some years of penitence. Josaphat was bent upon seeking out Barlam. He surrendered his kingdom to a friend and, at length, found him, after a painful search, in the wilderness. Barlam died, and Josaphat, having adopted the habit, lived for many years.

Couto says, after relating the story of the Buddha :

To this name the Gentiles throughout all India have dedicated

great and superb pagodas. With reference to this story we have been diligent in enquiring if the ancient Gentiles of those parts had in their writings any knowledge of St. Josaphat who was converted by Barlam, who in his legend is represented as the son of a great King of India, and who had just the same upbringing, with all the same particulars, that we have recounted of the life of the Budão. . . . And as a thing seems much to the purpose, which was told us by a very old man of the Salsette territory in Baçaim, about Josaphat, I think it well to cite it: As I was travelling in the Isle of Salsette, and went to see that rare and admirable Pagoda (which we call the Canará Pagoda) made in a mountain with many halls cut out of one solid rock . . . and enquiring from this old man about the work, and what he thought as to who had made it, he told us that without doubt the work was made by order of the father of St. Josaphat to bring him up in seclusion, as the story tells. And as it informs us that he was the son of a great King in India, it may well be, as we have just said, that *he* was the Budão, of whom they relate such marvels.[81]

It is pleasant to think that Christianity on the West Coast, flourishing as it did side by side with Buddhism, welcomed the edifying figure of the Buddha into the company of the Christian saints, and died out, but not before it had transferred this precious gift to the Persian Church, its parent. The Persian Church passed the gift on to the Greek Church, and the Greek Church to the Roman, and it thus became the prized possession of the Catholic world. The legend was first translated into Pehlavi, and from it successively into Syriac, Greek and Latin. Josaphat is a corruption of Bodhisat, i.e., Bodhisattva, due to the Semetic tongue confusing between "y" and "b." Buddhism has been called a half-way house, a foretaste of Christianity, and the words attributed to Buddha Śakyamuni anticipate the Gospel:

> To do little good is better than to perform difficult tasks. To understand the value of almsgiving, one should share even one's last mouthful. The perfect man is nothing unless he pours out his charity on all, and consoles the foresaken. My doctrine is the doctrine of pity; that is why the happy of the world

[81] Couto, Decada V, liv. VI, cap. II, pp. 16-17.

> find it difficult. . . . There is a sacrifice easier than milk, oil and honey—it is the giving of alms. Instead of sacrificing animals, let them go. Let them find grass, water, cool breezes![82]

Indeed, if the Buddha did live the life he is credited with in the Buddhistic canon, he has as much claim as any saint to this title. And in the words of Max Müller, the noted Orientalist :

> No one, either in the Greek or Roman Church need be ashamed of having paid to his memory the honour that was intended for St. Josaphat, the prince, the hermit, and the saint.[83]

[82] Grousset, *The Sum of History*, pp. 101-102.
[83] Yule, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. II, pp. 322-28.

CHAPTER VII

ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

AT THE TIME of the arrival of the Portuguese, the St. Thomas Christians were spread over no fewer than seventeen of the kingdoms into which Kerala was divided. The more important of these kingdoms were Cananore, Calicut, Travancore, and Cochin, and the three minor ones with relations with these Christians were Kodungalore (Cranganore), Mangat, and Kollam (Quilon). There were a number of churches, fifty settlements, and one hundred thousand Christians.[1] These Christians were known among the Hindus as *Nazranis*, the word Christiani coming into vogue not before the Portuguese period.[2] They had carved for themselves an important place in the Hindu hierarchy of castes, being regarded as even superior to the Nayars, who constituted the second estate of the realm. In fact, the Nayars held the St. Thomas Christians in such high esteem that they deemed it an honour when the latter condescended to address them as brothers; and the Christians, in order to preserve their title to nobility, would not touch people of inferior castes—including the Nayars themselves, and would, whilst going along the road, shout to the people from afar to make way for them. If any person of the lower castes crossed their path they had the right to kill him. Their social status was thus the same as that of the Brahmans, to whom the kings themselves bowed, excepting the Christians.[3]

[1] Antão, *De Synodi Diamperitanae Natura Atque Decretis*, no. 1, p. 148. "Enformação da Cristandade de S. Tomé que estaa no malavar da India Oriental de 77." Writing to the king on January 15, 1550, Fr. Mateus Dias, an Indian Latin priest, said that on the coast alone there were more than forty thousand of these St. Thomas Christians. *Documentacão*, vol. IV, p. 477; Souza, *Oriente Conquistado*, 2, 1, 2, 23, p. 74. The figure given in the above document published by Mgr. Antão—800,000—is far too inflated to correspond with reality.

[2] *KSP*, series 2, p. 77, note 25.

[3] Croze, *Histoire de Christianisme des Indes*, pp. 95-96. La Croze has taken his material from Gouvea and Vincenzo Maria di Santa Caterina, da Siena, whose works, however, are not accessible to me.

They were the most cultivated among the people of Malabar, both in mind and in body. They were mentally alert and were usually sententious, given to illustrate their point with apt proverbs and incidents drawn from history and fables. They had formed elaborate rules of etiquette and were punctilious in their observance. In the presence of their elders and priests, they would keep standing until bidden to sit, and once seated they would not rise unless given leave to do so. In their assemblies, only the eldest and most venerated among them could participate in the discussions; the others would not venture to speak till they were questioned. When parents spoke to the children and the teachers to the pupils, the youngsters held their left hands before their mouths, a gesture which, among them, betokened respect. A striking feature of this ceremonial etiquette was that when any two of them met in the street, the inferior extended his arm flexed and presented his hand to the superior, which was done in deference to age and to secular and ecclesiastical dignity. This was a courtesy which contributed not a little to the prevalence of peace and harmony among them, and added a charm all its own to their deportment.[4]

They were generally proportionate and well-built, and their complexion, if it tended to be a little dark, was certainly much lighter than that of other peoples of Malabar. They were frugal in their ways and abstemious in their food habits, their meals consisting of a little rice boiled in water and salt with a little ginger and buttermilk added to it, or a kind of broth which they called *caril* (curry) composed of aromatic drugs. If they took along with this simple repast a little jaggery, butter, and salt-fish, it passed for a great feast. They rarely ate meat, as they refrained from partaking of anything which they feared would endanger their health. As for drink, those who had any concern for their reputation never tasted it, it being considered incompatible with a man's honour and dignity to partake of spirituous liquors. It is no wonder, thanks to these precious habits and abstentions, many of them lived to a ripe old age.[5] A section among them, however, was much given to drinking, which led to brawls resulting in culpable homicide and murder. To put an end to this enormity, the Church punished it with excommunication, from which, not even at the hour of death, could a delinquent be absolved.[6]

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90. [5] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-95. [6] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 19, p. 71.

They enjoyed the great privileges which had been secured by them since the days of Thomas Cana and other leaders "for the time that the sun and moon shall last."[7] They were not answerable to any governor but to the king and his chief minister.[8] They alone could ride on elephants—a privilege reserved for the princes of the royal blood, and they alone could sit in the presence of the king, a privilege permitted only to ambassadors. Sometime during the fifteenth century, the king of Parur, on the opposite side of the Cranganore river, tried to admit the Nayars to this latter privilege. But the Christians declared war on him in protest and compelled him to restore the *status quo ante*.[9] If any Christian received a physical injury from a Hindu, he had to expiate the offence by offering a hand of gold or silver, as the case may be, commensurate with the dignity of the victim, to the Church, failing which he could be put to death without further ado.[10] The law recognized their patronage of several humbler castes such as goldsmiths, smelters, carpenters and blacksmiths, which castes had a right to invoke their protection in case of maltreatment from any other castes, as also the cultivators of palms who made up the militia commanded by the Christians.[11] Like the Brahmans, the Christians were permitted to have the front gate of their houses closed, and their bridal couples were permitted to bedeck their hair with flowers of gold. These flowers resembled the cluster of leaves forming the crest of a pineapple.[12]

They were the finest soldiers in the whole of Malabar, being the very best shots, and so, were matchless in the chase. They were reputed to be dour in the face of the enemy. In consequence, the greater the number of Christians a prince had in his armies, the more was he feared and respected by his neighbours. It was for their prowess no less than for their loyalty and their truthful nature, that the princes cherished their presence so much. They always went well-armed, some carrying swords and sheaths and others muskets and lances, the use of which they knew to perfection. The majority, however, was content to carry a naked

[7] Daniel, *Kottayam Plate of Vira-Raghava Chakravarti*, *IA*, LIII (1924), p. 187.

[8] Croze, *op. cit.*, p. 95. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 96. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 95. [11] *Ibid.*

[12] Joseph, *Malabar Christians and their Ancient Documents*, p. 4, note 4. A photograph of such a golden flower is published by this author in the *Indian Antiquary* for 1928.

sword in the right hand and a shield in the left. When they entered a church they left their weapons in the porch which then wore the aspect of a veritable guard-house, and when they came back for their weapons they picked them up without any disorder, each one taking what was his.[13] Like the Nayars, they were initiated in the art of fencing at any early age and the training went on till they attained the age of twenty-five. Their chief occupation, however, was agriculture, especially the cultivation of pepper which brought them large fortunes. There were also traders among them who, as Fr. de Souza observes, "even though they were not so astute as the *banias*, knew enough to manage things to their profit."[14]

Although few among them are known to have dedicated themselves to literary pursuits,[15] they were talented and prudent. The Jesuits who worked among them were all praise for the facility with which they could read and write in diverse languages. "During the period of our supremacy over the coast of Malabar," says de Souza, "there were priests in the churches of the foothills (*serra*) who celebrated Mass in Syriac and, when they came down to Cochin, in Latin, the ceremonies of the one differing from those of the other, and in their dealings with us use Portuguese. Thus, they knew, besides their own mother-tongue—which is Malabar—Syriac and Latin as well, learnt from grammars, and Portuguese, which they mastered by practice."[16]

They dressed like the other Malabarians—the men draping themselves to the knees with a silk cloth, but nude from the waist upwards. This cloth was often of very rich fabric girded with silk ribbons, and the girdles were of highly garnished gold. At home they wore a simple and modest garment, the *cabaia* (pekin), of white or blue. Their women bored the lobes of their ears and enlarged the holes by fitting coils into them, and covered themselves from head to foot with a white or blue veil or mantle. Both wore their hair long, the men tying it in a knot at the top of the head, or on one of the sides, with a ribbon of silk, a practice which seems to have continued down to the end of the nineteenth century.[17]

[13] Croze, *op. cit.*, p. 93. [14] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 19, p. 71.
[15] Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, p. 5. [16] Souza, *loc. cit.*
[17] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 2, 18, p. 70.

Writing in 1930, T. K. Joseph says that the men finally discarded their long tufts of hair and their ear-rings only about fifty years before that year.

The only ones among them that cut their hair were those who had been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas (at Mylapore), and those who were fervent in religious practice, besides those of advanced age. In common with Hindu widows the Christian ones had their heads shaved. The Christians followed the law of inheritance prevailing among the Hindus who had adopted the patriarchal system. This law did not permit inheritance through the female line, with the consequence that in the absence of sons the family property lapsed to the next male of kin. This resulted in great suffering to families where there were only daughters who, if unmarried, or if they were infants, were often brought to ruin or perished.[18]

The Christians had their own quarter in the towns and villages where they dwelt apart so as to be left free to develop according to the spirit of their religion uninfluenced by the practices prevalent among their neighbours. They cultivated charity and treated even their slaves with so much love and affection that cases were not wanting of slaves inheriting from their masters;[19] and their women prized virtue and purity of life to such a degree that they would not have among them any grown-up unmarried girls. Valignano is, of course, mistaken when, in explanation of matriarchy prevailing in Malabar among the Nayars, he remarks :

> And it is because their (Christian) women lived virtuously that, alone among these people of Malabar, the sons succeeded to the inheritance of their fathers, contrary to the universal custom prevalent among these people (the Nayars) who, on account of the want of virtue in their women, regard their sons as illegitimate and exclude them from succession, passing their inheritance to their nephews or sisters' children instead.[20]

These Christians were divided into two parties, Baregumpagan

Ward and Conner, during their survey of Travancore and Cochin from July 1816 to the end of 1820, found them wearing long tufts of hair. "The dress of the men" (among the Nassaranies), they say, "has nothing peculiar in it; they generally go bare-headed, their black luxuriant but greasy locks floating to the wind, or tied in a knot behind." "Memoir of the Survey," vol. I, 1863, *KSP*, series 2, p. 77, note 25.

[18] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 20, pp. 71-72. [19] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 2, 19, p. 71.

[20] Valignano, *Historia del Principio y Progresso de la Compania de Jesus en las Indias Orientales*, p. 340.

and Tegumpagan,[21] inhabitants of the north and those of the south, in the language of the country. The origin of this division is accounted for by the legend that Thomas Cana, a Syrian merchant, had two wives, one legal and the other bondmaid, each living in one of the two quarters of Cranganore. Their offspring were respectively the Southists and the Northists. It was, however, a moot point as to who was which. For when the Southists taunted the Northists, the latter would return the rebuke, which led to much disputation, and eventually to the formation of two mutually exclusive endogamous sects or castes into which the ancient St. Thomas Christians of Malabar are split up. A rational explanation of this division is attempted by Monserrate, when he says :

> What is more likely is that they originated from both, that is from the glorious St. Thomas and from Mar Thoma, and from many Nayres who are daily converted. They are a Christianity of seventy thousand souls, and they are reduced to these two classes by the lie of the land, and not only since they are descended from them (from Mar Thoma's two wives) ; for some live on the south side, others on the north side.[22]

According to the traditional accounts collected by the Portuguese, St. Thomas, before leaving Malabar for Tartary and China, made over the government of the church to the bishops whom he consecrated from among those of his disciples who pleased him most. These bishops founded churches in Cranganore and Quilon. For many years this Christianity persevered in the Faith and doctrine which St. Thomas had taught, when there appeared Muslim Arabs in Kerala who began persecuting the Christians. These latter withdrew to the hills and forests where they founded their settlements and lived in their primitive doctrine, until at last, the supply of their own bishops having failed, they petitioned to the See of Babylon. The Patriarch sent to it a metropolitan archbishop with the title of Archbishop of India, and two suffragan bishops with the titles respectively of Bishop of Sacappa and Bishop of Macina.[23] The former was probably Socotra, while the latter, if it could be construed as *Mha-cina*, would be "Grand China." Be

[21] Croze, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
[22] Hosten, "The Cana Copper-Plate Grant," *IA*, vol. LVI (1927), p. 121.
[23] Couto, Decada VII, pp. 15-16.

that as it may, from Babylon there did come a bishop according to the ancient document of the archbishopric, and thus the ancient Christianity of St. Thomas was preserved in its pristine purity.[24] Later, however, it became the practice of the St. Thomas Christians, whenever they felt it necessary to replenish their supply of bishops, to send a delegation to Iraq and to bring back with it, each time, six consecrated monks as bishops, who would then work in unison.[25] The government of the church, however, was in practice, in the hands of the archdeacon,[26] who collected the contribution already fixed by himself, which each settlement under the jurisdiction of a bishop should pay towards the support of the latter. This sum was usually collected when the bishop paid his visit to the settlement. There were, besides, other sources from which a prelate drew his emoluments, for instance, when he ordained priests, the *Catenars* (*Kashīshas*)—an honorific derived from *kartan*, meaning lord—and when he conferred orders on deacons, who were called *Chamaz* (*Shamasha*).[27]

The bishops enjoyed the privilege of *vilāvāṭa* and *pāvāṭa*, the former meaning the black and white cloth spread one over the other for the use of the chief guest, and the latter cloth for the bishop to walk on. They shared with the princes the privilege of having the *koṛṛakkuṭa*, the peculiar umbrella now used in the procession of St. Thomas Christian bishops, and in the state procession of a maharaja. They enjoyed the privilege of *munnaṭa* or forerunners going in front of their procession, with a covered wooden sword, as was done in the state procession.[28] The bishops were also accorded the privilege, by the local princes, of administering justice in civil cases arising among the Christians who, however, in regard to criminal causes and temporal matters, came under the governance of the princes, to whom they paid the ordinary taxes. The prelates, in their turn, appointed judges to hear and decide cases. The litigants had the right to plead in their own behalf for as long as they desired, and Fr. de Souza, who mentions this, speaks of a woman who took full three days to plead her cause. When they heard the parties, the judges gave their verdict from which there was no appeal. The court, however, had no power of inflicting

[24] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 14, p. 68.
[25] *Documentacão*, vol. III, p. 550; Letter of Fr. Penteado to the king, 1515-18.
[26] Antão, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Daniel, *art. cit.*, p. 87.

capital punishment but could only award cash damages.[29] This amount was made over to the church. If the guilty party refused to pay the fine, the *Catenar* cast him out of the church. There was no alternative punishment which the *Catenar* could inflict except excommunication, which seems to have been very much dreaded by the people. A person under excommunication was denied what was termed *casturi*, which is a sign of peace with the church, and consisted in the Christians kissing the hands of the priest and placing them between their palms at the end of the service.[30]

According to the estimate of Duarte Barboza, the *Catenars* were extremely devout.[31] They received Holy Orders between the ages of seventeen and twenty, after which they entered into matrimony. De Souza observes that it was not infrequent to come across three generations of the same family as priests, and serving in the same church.[32] Sometimes mere striplings were ordained priests, the prelates conferring inferior as well as Holy Orders on them on the same day : "having for money and not for any extraordinary sufficiency, all the orders, inferior as well as Holy, conferred upon them in one day."[33] They were, as a rule, dutiful, being punctilious at the singing of the holy Office in the church, at three in the morning and at five in the evening.[34] They went about in doublets, "with their skirts flanting out,"[35] and the vestments they used in the church consisted of "no more than a sheet" over the usual garments all worked with crosses with the stole worn over it.[36] They supported themselves with the benefices of the church, stipends for obsequies and funeral meals, which usually went round the whole year, called the *chātam*, besides trading on their own account.[37] In their morals, as a Jesuit report of January 4, 1578, on the Christians of St. Thomas would have us believe, there was little to distinguish them from laymen.[38] Some gave scandal by being disorderly in eating and drinking, while some hired themselves as soldiers under their kings, either to escape from being vexed by these latter or to seek their favour and protection against their own prelates.[39] Following the practice common among

[29] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 18, p. 70. [30] Antão, *loc. cit.*
[31] Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barboza*, p. 100 ; Antão, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
[32] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 21, p. 73. [33] *Diamper*, Session VII, Decree I
[34] *Ibid.* [35] *Ibid.*, Decree XII. [36] Souza, *loc. cit.* [37] Antão, *loc cit*
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 148. [39] *Diamper*, Session VII, Decree XV.

their Hindu neighbours, they fixed propitious and unpropitious days for marriages, and for that end kept an account of the auspicious and inauspicious days, according to the reckoning of the Hindus, in their books, using even some of their prayers. They also cast horoscopes and had them entered in the church registers. Anantakrishna Ayyar refers to a book kept in churches and consulted when arranging marriages, the *Palpusthakam*. It was in Syriac and contained forty-nine statements of a rather general and moralizing character and it was believed that guidance would be given through a number selected therefrom. For this purpose the priest would first make the sign of the Cross and then recite the *Pater* and the *Ave* and the *Credo*, and then have someone to select a number out of the forty-nine.[40] They also consulted a book called the *Parsiman*, or the Persian Medicine, for exorcizing, and used the formulae given therein for this purpose.[41] Some of them, though married three or four times—against the clear Pauline injunction to the contrary—were still exercising their ministry, reckoning themselves safe in conscience, having taken care to obtain a licence from their prelates, and got themselves absolved from the penalty of excommunication, which their action entailed.[42] They had to be paid for administering the sacrament of Baptism, with the result that a great number of poor people who lived in the heaths did not bring their children to be baptized. These children, when they grew up, received the Holy Eucharist with others and, out of mere shame of letting it be known that they were not christened, died without Baptism.[43] The faithful seem to have been neglected so far by the clergy that, in many villages situated at a distance from a

[40] Ayyar, *Anthropology of the Syrian Christians*, pp. 136-46.

[41] "This book was full of sorceries, teaching certain methods whereby one may do mischief to one's enemies, and may gain women, and for a great many other lewd and prohibited purposes; there are likewise in it strange names of devils, of whom they affirm, that whosoever shall carry the names of seven of them about him writ in a paper, shall be in no danger of any evil: it contains also many superstitious exorcisms for the casting out of devils; mixing some godly words with others that are not intelligible; and with the invocation of the most Holy Trinity, oftentimes desiring the doing of lewd things, and enormous sins, joining the merits of Nestorius and his followers, many times, in the same prayer with those of the Blessed Virgin, and those of their devils, with those of the holy angels." *Diamper*, Session III, Decree XIV.

[42] *Diamper*, Session VII, Decree XVI.

[43] *Diamper*, Session IV, Decree III.

church, there was little left of Christianity in the Christian inhabitants, save the name "St. Thomas Christians." While in Thiruvancode, the church having been wrecked sometime in the middle of the sixteenth century, the Christians had left the fold.[44] The wives of the *Catenars*, who were called *Catatiars* or *Cattaneiras*, enjoyed an honoured place in the church, and wore in their necks, as an emblem of their dignity, a cross of gold, or of some other metal, over other jewels.[45] They partook of the profits of the church equally with the officiating priest.[46]

The general run of these *Catenars* was sufficiently learned in the Chaldean language as to understand the Old and New Testaments. They were taught at their university at Angamale,[47] by teachers who were well-versed in Holy Scripture. Among the authors held in high esteem by them was St. Chrysostom, and they also had many apocrypha.[48] The Portuguese, who during the early days of their contact thought that the church followed the "doctrine of the Blessed Thomas,"[49] believed that it held the same books of the Old and New Testaments as canonical as did the Roman Church.[50] In course of time, however, as the Catholic missioners became better acquainted with the Bible used in the Malabar Church, they discovered to their surprise that the books of Esther, Tobit, and Wisdom, were wanting in the Old Testament, the whole of the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third Epistles of St. John, and that of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse of St. John, were wanting in the New Testament, while there were omissions in the beginning of the eighth chapter of St. John, namely, the History of the Adultress that was carried before Our Lord, and from the fourth and fifth chapters of the first Epistle of St. John, the verses respectively: *Qui solvit Jesus non est ex Deo* (who tears away from Jesus is not from God), and "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one;" and in the tenth chapter of St. Luke, instead of "Christ sent seventy-two disciples," it was said that He "sent seventy disciples."[51] Then again it was found

[44] *Diamper*, Session VIII, Decrees V and VI.
[45] Souza, *loc. cit.*
[46] *Diamper*, Session VII, Decree XVIII.
[47] *Documentacão*, vol. VIII, p. 498.
[48] Antão, *loc. cit.*
[49] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 89.
[50] Gois, *Cronicado Felicissimo Rei D. Manoel*, pt. I, pp. 214-16.
[51] *Diamper*, Session III, Decree II.

that in the twentieth chapter of the *Acts* of the Apostles, where St. Paul says: "take heed to yourselves, and the whole church, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops to rule the church of God which he purchased with his blood," the word God was changed for that of Christ; and the sentence was made to read "that Christ hath made them govern His church which he purchased with His own blood." And in the third chapter of the first Epistle of St. John, where it is said "in this we know the love of God, because He laid down His life for us," the word God was left out and that of Christ substituted making the verse read: "that in this we know the love of Christ. . . ." And in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews where the Apostle says: "we have seen Jesus for the passion of His death crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for all men," the verse was made to read: "we have seen Jesus for the passion of His death crowned with honour and glory, that the grace of God (*proeter deum*, or besides God), might taste death for all."[52]

The Catholic missioners concluded that in making the deletions from, and effecting changes in the text, the compelling motive was the Procrustean one of bringing the texts into conformity with the Nestorian doctrines. But the version of the Scriptures with which they compared the Syriac *MSS.* of the Bible they found in Malabar was merely the Latin Vulgate, and they did not take the trouble to see if the Syriac version conformed to the Greek original or even to other Latin exemplars known to be earlier than the Vulgate.[53] Catholic scholarship, however, has since made ample amends for these hasty conclusions, and J. S. Assemani, the great Maronite Catholic scholar, has actually exculpated the Nestorians from any deliberate intent in altering the Scriptures to suit their convenience. Thus, speaking about the missing books, he remarks:

> The apocalypse of the Blessed John is missing not only in the Nestorian copies but also in the Syrian codices of the Catholics and the Jacobites; and therefore neither Sabensis nor Barhebraeus nor Jacob of Edessa include it in the category of Holy Scriptures, because actually in the Vulgate (or simple) Syrian version

[52] *Ibid.*, Decree III.

[53] Croze, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-29.

as it is called, it does not exist. Neither do the Catholic Epistles of Jude, the other of Peter, the second and third of John; and whatever there is of these divine books in the Syriac translations were worked upon much later than the Vulgate.[54]

As to the omission of the History of the Adultress, he says:

All scholars know that the story of the adultress which is found in John 8, is missing in many Greek copies, as I have noted about the Syrians also from Barsalibi and Barhebraeus (Tom. 2, pp. 53 and 169), and it is clearly seen in the London Polyglot (Tom. 5, p. 440) in the Syrian title that the reading about the sinful woman is not in the simple i.e., Vulgate Syrian version.[55]

Then with regard to alterations, the same scholar has observed, absolving the Nestorians of all complicity:

Excepting one place in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, the Nestorians are undeservedly made out to be corrupters of Holy Scriptures. All those places to which Possevimus has called attention occur in the Vulgate Syrian version which is older than the Nestorian heresy as is clear both from the very old manuscript codices still extant with the Syrian Orthodox, the Nestorians and the Jacobites and from the New Testament (Syrian version) edited at Paris, London, Rome and elsewhere. The Greek text and even the Arabic and the Ethiopic editions also favour the Nestorians, not to speak of the Syrian version. For in the first place what Luke says in 6.33, "lend without giving up hope of any return," the Arab translator also rendering it in the same way. Then again, (while) it is found in Latin in Luke 10,1 that the Lord appointed also other seventy-two, the Greek, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic (versions) consistently read seventy. Thirdly, in the Vulgate Syrian version Act 20,28 reads in all the Syrian texts: "that you feed the church of Christ which he has acquired with his blood," which the translator in the Polyglot unhappily rendered in Latin thus: "that you feed that Church unto the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." Sabarjesus, the Nestorian Presbyter, says that the

[54] Assemani, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pt. II, p. CCXXIX.
[55] *Ibid.*

Jacobites instead of the Church of Christ read the Church of God. If this be true, it must be understood with reference to the Heraclensian version which has a high place among the Jacobites and not with regard to the Vulgate Syrian version. Fourthly, the passage in John 1,16 "that in this we have known the charity of God," which is rendered in Syrian, as "in this we have known His charity towards us," read in the Greek and the Arabic as "in this we have known charity," suppressing the word God ; and as for the words which are found in Latin in 1 John 4,3 : "every spirit that tears away from Jesus is not of God," they (the Greek and the Arabic) read with the Syrian : "and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus came in the flesh is not God."

Assemani concludes :

> It remains, therefore, that we rightly reprove one thing in the Nestorians that this part of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 2,9, "that God Himself through His grace tasted death for all" was corrupted by them to read "He inasmuch as He was not God tasted death for all." Barhebraeus objects to the Nestorians as is seen in Tom. 2, p. 290, *Bibliotheca Orientales Clementino Vaticana* where I have compared the Syriac version with the Latin, Greek, and Ethiopic, and have shown that the Nestorians differ from all. All this is admitted by the Nestorians, Sabarjesus Presbyter and Jesujabus Metropolitan Nisibenus, who attempt to put forward their own version (indeed corrupted) against the Jacobites.[56]

As to the omission from the Old Testament, Assemani observes that they were expressly declared uncanonical by the Fifth Ecumenical Synod Collat. 4a num. 63 and 71, and therefore were excluded from their version of the Scriptures.[57]

The St. Thomas Christians were a religious-minded people.[58] They went to church regularly, morning and evening, for the adoration of the Cross, which they held in the greatest veneration. They had it prominently displayed on the doors of their houses

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. CCXXVIII-CCXXIX.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. CCXXXVI.
[58] Dames, *loc. cit.*

and their walls,[59] looking upon it as the emblem of their salvation, beholding the Saviour outstretched upon it for the remission of the sins of mankind and for the renewal of all creation.[60] They would not enter the church without washing themselves and donning spotlessly clean clothes, saying that "they are not worthy to enter except when clean." They had to observe ceremonial cleanliness on the road to the church in that they avoided being touched by anyone. On entering the churchyard they washed their feet at the well which they had at the entrance of every one of their churches. At the door they fell on their knees and described three crosses with the forehead, and as they entered they bowed low before the Cross. They did likewise at the font, which was at the right side of the chapel and bent before the apartment reserved for the baking of the sacramental bread, which was to the left. And then, turning to the middle of the church, they said their prayers together in a loud but melodious voice with the priest or the deacon leading. When the prayers were over they all bent their heads to the ground, praying silently for a brief moment and then, rising, went to kiss the hand of the priest or to touch those of the deacon. On Sundays and holidays they refrained from servile work, which, however, they could resume at sundown, obviously reckoning the day from evening to evening, in keeping with the Biblical custom.

Curiously enough, they did not celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays,[61] which was offered very few times during the year, except in Lent, when it was celebrated every Sunday.[62] The language used in the liturgy was Syro-Chaldaeic and the rites that they followed appeared to the Portuguese as similar to the Greek.[63] This was not surprising, considering the fact that Christianity was propagated in Persia by preachers whose mother-tongue was Syriac. Further, from antiquity—from the ninth to the seventh centuries B.C. down to the fall of Babylon in 538 B.C.—the enterprising Armenians had so strongly established themselves in Persia that

[59] Monserrate, "Information about the Christians of St. Thomas," cited in Hosten, *loc. cit.*

[60] Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

[61] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 22, p. 73. This point is made clear in the next reference. De Souza says that "they heard Mass on Sundays, but not obliged by precept."

[62] *Documentacão*, vol. III, p. 548; Fr. Penteado to the king.

[63] Souza, *loc. cit.*

the Persian emperors were compelled to permit the use of Aramaic in the administration, at least in the western part of their empire. Aramaic had also long been used in commercial circles, and since the beginning of the first century of our era the Syriac of Edessa had spread almost throughout the dominions of the Arsacids.[64]

Fr. Penteado, who had closely observed the manner of offering the Mass, describes its liturgy as follows :

> I also saw their sacrifice and the way of offering it. And the sacrifice is of bread made of wheat, and of wine made of grapes. Further, the bread is mixed with salt and olive oil, and the wine, which is made from raisins, has more water than it should normally have. This they offer very few times in the year. In Lent, however, it is offered every Sunday, when more women and men than the church can hold attend. When the priest raises the sacrament, which he does during the Mass only once, all rise and bend their heads to the ground and say that they are not worthy to behold it.
>
> And the priest having communicated, and before finishing the Mass, comes to the deacons (ministers), without whom he cannot celebrate, inasmuch as one of the deacons brings the sacrament divided into pieces, and another brings the chalice with the blood, and the priest between them goes to the door of the chapel. Then the men come, carrying their hands with their palms facing upwards in the form of an open cross i.e., the left hand below and the right above, and the priest takes the sacrament and puts it on the palm, and they take it into the mouth, and they leave from the left, having partaken of the blood with their mouths from the same chalice ; and the women, following them, do likewise.[65]

This description agrees almost *tot idem verbis* with the description given by a Dominican missioner from Mosul in Iraq, towards the close of the nineteenth century, of the ancient practice of serving Holy Communion which was well-preserved at Achita :

> First of all a priest reads during the Mass a formula of general absolution on the people ; all this while the people remain on

[64] Tisserant, "L'Eglise Nestorienne," *DTC*, vol. XI, pp. 263-64.
[65] *Documentacão, loc. cit.*

their knees and strike their breasts. When the moment of Communion arrives, the celebrant advances to the threshold of the sanctuary with the deacon and the sub-deacon. The former carries a tray filled with a large number of particles of hosts, while the latter holds a vast chalice containing the precious blood with a serviette on the arm.

At the same time the communicants come forward from the Epistle side, one behind the other, the priests and the *chemmas* (deacons) who are not officiating coming first and then the ordinary faithful. The priests and the *chemmas* have their loins girt by a band of wool on their ordinary habits. They all advance with an air of gravity and alertness. At the door of the sanctuary, at the Epistle side, is a burning censer. Each communicant while passing before it perfumes with it his hands, face and chest. On reaching the priest, he kisses the hands of the priest, while remaining standing, and prepares to offer him his right hand crossed on the left.

The priest deposits in it the particle of the host which the communicant absorbs licking it from the hand, which he extends immediately before him for cleaning it. Thereafter he goes to the sub-deacon, kisses the sleeve of his alb, drinks of the chalice, cleans his mouth with the serviette and returns by the gospel side, keeping his hands on his lips.

The women are also administered Communion in the same manner, but at the end of the Mass after the menfolk have left.[66]

It is evident from this description that the St. Thomas Christians believed in the real presence. In point of fact the Nestorian doctrine in respect of the Eucharist corresponds in its essentials to that held by the universal church. Its exposition by Mar 'Ābhd Īshō in *The Book of the Pearl* (*Kethâbha dhe Marghânithâ*) begins with the statement of the doctrine according to tradition :

The old oblations consisted of irrational animals and of the blood of bodies, but with us the Only-begotten of GOD, Who took upon Him the form of a servant, He offered His own body a sacrifice to His FATHER for the life of the world, and hence He is called by John, "The Lamb of GOD which taketh away the

[66] Tisserant, *op. cit.*, *c.* 315. From a *MS.* in the possession of the Dominicans in Mosul.

sins of the world." And again it is said of Him, that "His blood is the New Testament, shed for many for the remission of sins." And again: "So GOD loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten SON," Who was offered up to His FATHER a living, rational sacrifice for all mankind, thereby reconciling the world to Himself, and bringing salvation to angels and to men. Now, seeing that it was impossible that His identical sacrifice upon the Cross for the salvation of all could be showed forth, in every place throughout all ages and to all men just as it was without any alteration, He beheld with an eye of mercy, and in wisdom and compassion . . . and lighted on an admirable means.

A brief account of the Last Supper follows and then the book continues:

> Through this divine institution the bread is changed into His Holy Body, and the wine into His Precious Blood, and they impart, to all who receive them in Faith and without doubting, the forgiveness of sins, purification, enlightenment, pardon, the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, the inheritance of Heaven, and the new life.

The affirmation of the real presence is explicit:

> Whenever we approach these sacraments we meet with Christ Himself and His very self we take into our hands and kiss and thereby we are joined to and with Christ, His holy Body mixing with our bodies and His pure Blood mingling with ours, and by Faith we know Him that is in Heaven and Him that is in the Church, to be but one Body.[67]

These affirmations are so practical that there is hardly any speculation in what the author says regarding the mystic presence of Christ on the altar being realized in the sacrament. This was attempted by other theologians in whose theories are found the same tendencies as are noticeable in the West in the Eucharistic contro-

[67] Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. II, pp. 408-09. Appendix B, which gives an English translation of this precious work written in A.D. 1298 by Mar 'Ābhd Ishō the Nestorian Metropolitan of Nisibis and Armenia.

versies during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thus, for instance, *An Exposition of the Gospels*, which was an exegesis of the New Testament, and must have been a popular textbook among the ecclesiastical students, taught, among other things :

> That there are two persons in Christ, and that Christ as a pure creature, was obliged to adore God, and stood in need of prayer ; that he was the temple of the most holy Trinity ; that Christ's soul when he died, descended into hell, but was carried to the paradise of Eden ; which was the place he promised to the thief on the cross : that Our Lady, the Virgin, deserved to be reproved for having vainly imagined, that she was mother to one that was to be a great King ; looking upon Christ as no other than a pure man ; and presuming that he was to have a temporal empire, as well as the rest of the Jews : that the evangelists did not record all Christ's actions in truth as they were, they not having been present at several of them ; which was the reason why they differed from one another so much : that the wise men that came from the East, received no favour from God, for the journey they took ; neither did they believe in Christ ; that Christ was the adopted Son of God, it being as impossible that he should be God's natural Son, as it is that just men should be so ; that he received new grace in Baptism, which he had not before ; that he is only the image of the Word, and the pure temple of the Holy Spirit ; that the Holy Eucharist is only the image of the body of Christ, which is only in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and not here on earth : that Christ, as pure man, did not know when the day of judgement was to be : that when St. Thomas put his hand into Christ's side, and said : "My Lord and my God !" he did not speak to Christ ; for that he that was raised was not God ; but it was only an exclamation made to God upon his beholding such a miracle : that the authority that Christ gave to St. Peter over the Church, was the same that he gave to other priests ; so that his successors have no more power or jurisdiction than other bishops : that Our Lady, the Virgin, is not the mother of God : that the first Epistle of St. John, and that of St. James, are not the writings of those holy Apostles, but of some other persons of the same name, and therefore are not canonical.[68]

[68] Hough, *The History of Christianity in India*, vol. II, pp. 547-48.

The central doctrine of Nestorious making the distinction between the two persons in Christ and holding that the union of the incarnation was accidental, being only that of love between the divine and the human persons, and that, in consequence, Christ is the adopted and not the natural son of God, was reiterated by a number of theological treatises, such as *The Macalamatas* and the *Book of John Barialdan* which, since they were accessible only in Syriac, must have been among the textbooks of theology recommended for study in the university. This idea was carried a step further by *The Menrah*, *The Life of Abbot Isaias* and *The Book of the Pearl*. *The Menrah* said that Christ was only an image of God, that the substance of God dwelt in Christ as in a temple, that Christ is next to the divinity, and that he was made a companion of God. *The Life of Abbot Isaias*, with its Nestorian commentary, considered it blasphemy to affirm that the Word was made flesh ; while *The Book of the Pearl* made a clear distinction between the two persons in Christ, the Word and Jesus. It inevitably followed from these premises that it was wrong to style Our Lady, who was the mother of Christ, as the mother of God, a doctrine which was the burden of the teachings of all their books. They seem to have held with the Greeks that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father—an affirmation which a book entitled *The Procession of the Holy Spirit* endeavoured to prove in detail. They also deemed it to be a sin to meditate on the holy passion and death of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.[69] Naturally, these ideas also made their way into the book of common prayers used by the laity as well as into the breviary used by the *Catenars*.

Just as *The Menrah* proclaimed Christ as the image of the Word, so did *The Book of Homilies* proclaim the Holy Eucharist as the image of Christ,[70] while *The Book of Timothy*, the Patriarch, roundly asserted that the true body of Our Lord was not there in the Holy Eucharist but only the figure thereof.[71]

In their apologetics they condemned St. Cyril, the chief opponent of Nestorius, to the nether regions ; *The Book of the Pearl* actually maintaining the excommunication of Nestorius, as was effected at the Council of Ephesus, at which St. Cyril presided, being tantamount to the excommunication of the Apostles and

[69] *Diamper*, Session III, Decree V.
[70] *Ibid.*, Decree XIV. [71] *Ibid.*

prophets and the whole Scripture.[72] It was further asserted, as does *The Book of the Synods*, that the Roman Church had fallen from faith, for perverting the Canons of the Apostles and for not celebrating in leavened bread, an inviolable custom of the church, coming down from the days of the Saviour and his holy Apostles. They therefore contended that there was no reason why their church should be subject to that of Rome, but rather it should be the other way about.[73] When pressed close their stock reply was that St. Peter and St. Thomas having preached two different laws, there could not but be two distinct churches, neither owing obedience to the other, both issuing immediately from Christ.[74]

In the Mass they commemorated the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon :

> *Orando pro sanctis patribus nostris patriarcha nostra pastor universalis totius ecclesiae catholicae* (i.e., by praying for our holy fathers, our patriarch, the pastor of the whole catholic church.)

and further saying, in mentioning his name :

> *Praecipue nos oportet orare pro incolumitate patrum nostrorum sanctorum, domini patriarchae totius ecclesiae catholicae pastoris* (It is both fitting and opportune to pray for the safety of our holy fathers, our lord the patriarch, the pastor of the whole catholic church.)

And in keeping with their doctrine that from Our Lady there was born a pure human being who thereafter was inhabited by the Divine Word, they commemorated as mother of Christ and not mother of God, the Blessed Virgin, saying :

> *commemoramus autem beatissimam Mariam matrem, virginem Christi et salvatoris* (i.e., let us however, commemorate the most blessed holy Virgin Mother of Christ and Saviour),

and furthermore, prayed for the preservation of the doctrine of Nestorius and others, in the following words :

[72] Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 400.
[73] *Diamper*, Session III, Decree XIV.
[74] *Ibid.*, Decree VII.

commemoramus quoque patres nostros, sanctos et veritatis doctores Dominum et sanctum Nestorium, etc., (i.e., let us also commemorate our fathers, the holy doctors of truth, our Lord and holy Nestor, etc.)

such as Theodorus, Diodorus, Abraham, and Narcissus. And as they held the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father, they omitted the word *filium* in the Mass from the words and read it as :

effundite coram illo corda vestra, jejunio, oratione, et paenitentia, placaverunt Christum, patrem quoque et spiritum ejus sanctum,[75] (i.e., lay bare in his presence your hearts, by fast, by prayer, and by penitence. They will please Christ, Father and the Holy Spirit.)

In keeping with these beliefs it was only natural that they should have venerated Nestorius and other great men of the Nestorian Church,[76] and they had particular devotion to Mar Xobro and Mar Phrod,[77] two saintly bishops who erstwhile ruled their church. They also believed that the souls of the saints do not enjoy the vision of God until after the last judgement and that, in the meanwhile they sojourned in the paradise of Eden—which was precisely the paradise Christ had promised the good thief—a laboured attempt to prove which was made in the abovementioned commentary on *The Life of Abbot Isaias.*[78]

Besides the Eucharist they had two other sacraments corresponding with those of the Roman Church : Baptism and Holy Orders.[79] In the administration of the former, they seem to have used as many forms as there were churches, some of these being inscribed on the baptistries. But it was usual to use the following two formulae :

N is baptized and perfected in the name of the Father, Amen ; in the name of the Son, Amen ; in the name of the Holy Ghost, Amen ;

[75] Diamper, Session V, Decree I ; and Session IV, Decree XVI.
[76] *Ibid.* [77] *Ibid.*, Session VIII, Decree XXV.
[78] *Diamper*, Session III, Decree XIV.
[79] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 21, p. 72.

the familiar Greek form :

> The servant of Christ is baptized in the name of the Father, Amen; in the name of the Son, Amen; in the name of the Holy Ghost, Amen.[80]

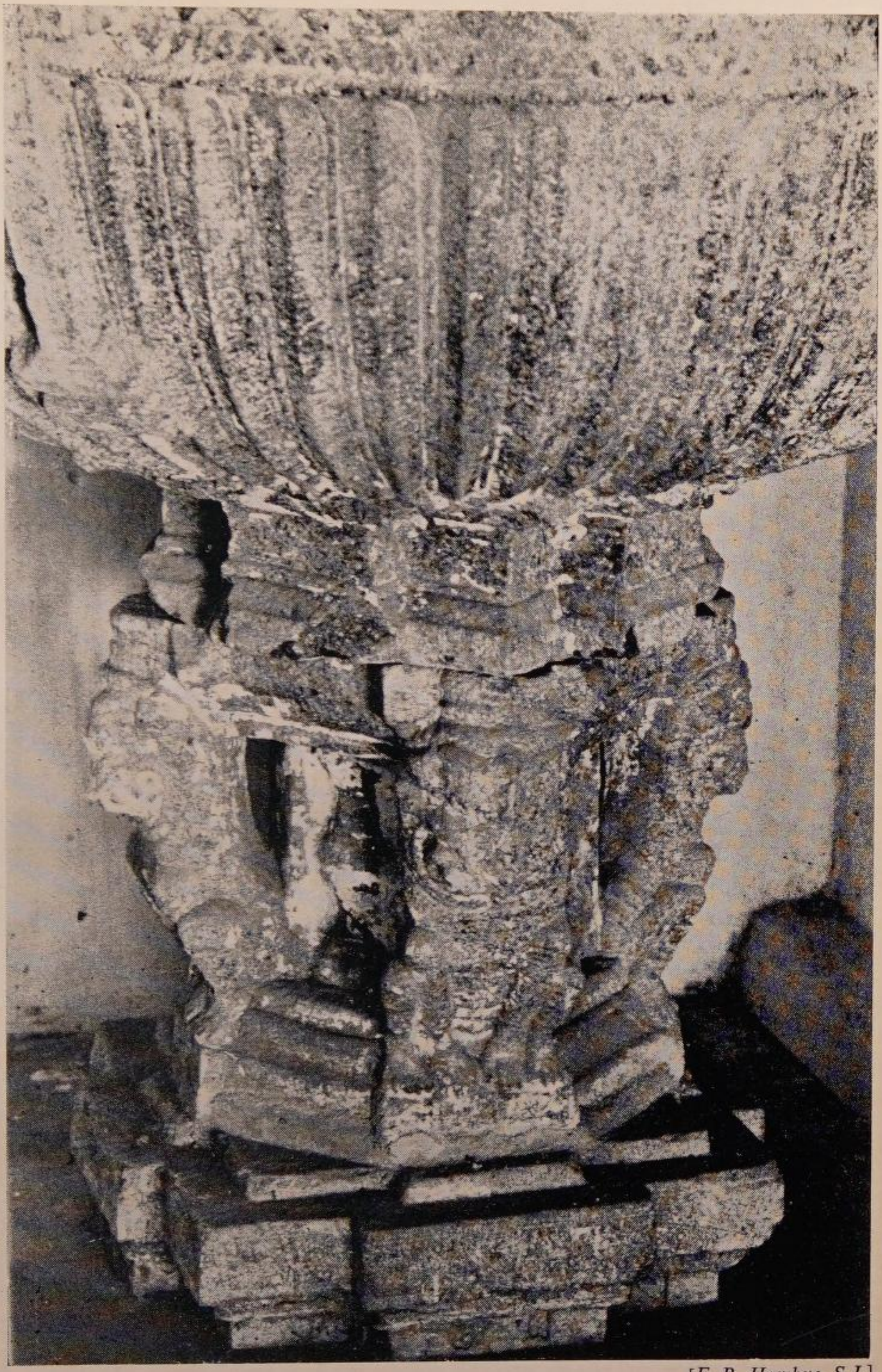
The Catholic missioners of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were perturbed over these formulae lest they should be invalid, a scruple which has ceased to disturb them at present.[81] These Christians baptized in water and used olive oil. Before Baptism they incensed legumes and put them to the mouth of the infant whilst naming it.[82]

As in all the other Eastern churches, Confirmation was so indissolubly connected with Baptism that it is not separately mentioned in his list of sacraments by the author of *The Book of the Pearl*— it being considered a subsidiary part of the sacrament of Baptism.[83] It is also possible that the significance of certain rites, as Amann suggests, may have been blurred when they fell into desuetude.[84]

They held that the most important sacrament was Holy Orders, which *The Book of the Pearl* puts at the head of the list. The author does not enter into the details of the diverse degrees involved therein but is content to say that following an apostolic tradition, priesthood is imparted by the laying of hands.[85] In substance, the Holy Orders of the Nestorians agreed with those of the Catholic Church,[86] and there were no Catholic theologians in the sixteenth century who ever thought of calling in question its validity.

They abhorred auricular confession, some holding it in the superstitious fear that they would die immediately if they did so.[87] They had, however, a general confession, for which they had a set form of prayers which they recited in a melodious voice and confessing themselves to God in its course.[88] Badger adds that it was usual in the Nestorian Church to read over the penitents, who would be kneeling or sitting in a humble posture, one or more

[80] *Diamper*, Session IV, Decree I.
[81] Amann, "L'Eglise Nestorienne," *DTC*, vol. XI, col. 309.
[82] *Documentacão*, vol. II, p. 359 ; Fr. Penteado to Cardinal D. Afonso.
[83] Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
[84] Amann, *op. cit.*, col. 309.
[85] Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 405.
[86] Amann, *op. cit.*, col. 312.
[87] *Diamper*, Session VI, Decree I.
[88] *Documentacão*, vol. III, p. 549 ; Fr. Penteado to the king (1515-18).



[*E. R. Hambye, S.J.*]

Edapalli Pre-Portuguese Baptismal Font—Hindu influence
4 lions as support (Syro-Malabar Church)

absolutions in the form of petitions from the *Kthawa d'Hoosaya* (or Book of Pardon). These absolutions consisted of supplications to God that He would mercifully pardon His penitent children and receive them back into his favour.[89]

Nor did they believe in Extreme Unction, while, as to Matrimony, they denied its sacramental character, maintaining that it could be dissolved for the bad condition of the parties :

> For fornication (that is to say adultery) by one of the conjoined, for reason of conscience which was divided into three—change of religion, attempt at poisoning, attempt to murder—and lastly, certain physical defects.[90]

The marriage was usually celebrated in the presence of the *Catenar* and solemnized by a ritual, the beauty of which excelled by far the liturgy in use in any church. The Synod of George I in 676 made the celebration of the rite obligatory.[91] When no *Catenar* could be found, the parties were married according to the custom prevailing in the country, according to which the groom tied a thread round the bride's neck and, by way of symbolizing the total mutual surrender, one of the parties put grains of gold into the hands of the other.[92] The Nestorian Synods were perturbed as to what should be construed as impediments to marriage, in particular, as to those proceeding from consanguinity, a precaution indispensable in a country like Persia, where Magism permitted consanguineous marriages, and even incest.[93] In some cases it seems that the marriage bond was not strictly adhered to among certain sections of the population. There were, for instance, Christians living in open concubinage,[94] while cases were not wanting of persons who either forsook their wives or even practised polygamy.[95]

All the same they professed seven sacraments and made up the number by splitting the Eucharist into oblation and holy leaven and adding to these the oil of unction and the Holy Cross. They accounted for the holy leaven as a sacrament by the legend that at the Last Supper Our Lord gave an extra consecrated loaf to

[89] Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 155. [90] Amann, *op. cit.*, col. 312. [91] *Ibid.*
[92] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 21, p. 73. [93] Amann, *loc. cit.*
[94] *Diamper*, Session IX, Decree XI.
[95] *Diamper*, Session VII, Decrees XI and XIII.

St. John, and the latter, having mixed it with the water that fell from Christ's body at His Baptism, and with the blood and water that flowed from His side on the Cross, divided the resulting dough among the Apostles. This dough, having been handed down from these by a process of leavening (*malka*) ever since, was being renewed on every Holy Thursday by the addition of fresh dough, salt and olive oil, through the ministration of a priest and deacon.[96] Similarly, they considered the "Oil of Unction" as "a succession of that which was consecrated by the Apostles." They reasoned that just as in the Mosaic Dispensation, priests and kings were anointed with the "Oil of Unction," so in the New Dispensation :

> Such as are separated to the kingdom of heaven and to the true priesthood, must be anointed by the same manifoldly symbolical unction, in order that they may be truly anointed ones and brethren of Christ, Who by His union with God, is truly and supernaturally anointed. . . .

Secondly, the oil of unction gave the necessary protection to the anointed. Just as an artist having finished a picture with all its rich colouring anoints it with oil in order that it may not easily be injured when brought into contact with other objects, so are those "drawn after the likeness of the Heavenly King are for that reason anointed, lest they should receive damage from the chances of the world and from the opposition of the devil."[97]

The last sacrament, the sign of the life-giving Cross, was important because :

> By this sign the Apostles wrought miracles, and the laying on of hands for the Priesthood, and all the other Sacraments of the Church are perfected thereby.[98]

They commenced their Lent on the Sunday of Quadragesima, during which they ate only once a day—before sunset. They also fasted during Advent, which they kept at the same time as did the Roman Church. They also fasted from August 1 to the day

[96] Attwater, *Christian Churches of the East*, vol. II, p. 196.
[97] Ishō, *The Book of the Pearl*, cited in Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 408.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

of the Assumption, and from September 1 to the feast of the Nativity, and by devotion they kept the fast of the Apostles, which lasted for fifty days after Pentecost. A curious fast which was in vogue was that of Jonas which lasted three days in commemoration of Jonas as a figure of Christ, fasting in the belly of the whale; on days of fast they had common meals served in the church. Fasting was an all-or-nothing affair i.e., either they fasted throughout, or, if once broken, they were not obliged to resume it. They also believed that the fast would be invalid if they did not bathe. On days of fast they refrained from eating eggs, fish, and milk foods, and abstained from wine and marital relations. On Good Friday they ate wormwood in memory of gall and vinegar which was offered to Our Lord. There was, however, no fasting on Sundays, when they could eat meat.[99]

The feasts of Our Lord and Our Lady were the same as those kept in the Roman Church.[100] They celebrated a special feast on the day of the Presentation of Our Lady (November 21) in commemoration of the landing of St. Thomas at a place near Pallipuram, which lies at a distance of two leagues from Cranganore. Here people gathered from places as distant as twenty leagues away and were treated to a sumptuous repast by some rich Christian, who celebrated the feast in thanksgiving for some favour received.[101]

There were also survivals of Semitic influences among them. Like many Semites they took names of the leading personages of the Old Testament[102] to which they added Christian names, such of those of the Apostles and martyrs of the early church. They also took the name "Hijo" or "Lyo,"[103] both of which stood for Jesus. Again, following the Semitic custom, the newly-married couple would not go to church till after the fourth day, which they did after washing themselves.[104] And, finally, a woman would not go to church for forty days after the birth of a male and eighty days after the birth of a female child.[105] Among other noteworthy customs may be mentioned the practice, when

[99] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 23, p. 73; *Diamper*, Session VIII, Decree XI; Antão, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-49.

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] *Documenta Indica*, vol. VI, p. 178.

[102] *Diamper*, Session IV, Decree XVI.

[103] *Diamper*, Session VII, Decree XX.

[104] *Diamper*, Session VIII, Decree XVI.

[105] *Diamper*, Session IX, Decree V.

they fell ill, to go, out of devotion, to lie in churches with their wives and families for several days, hoping thereby to be cured.[106] There were no cemeteries properly so called. The Christians buried their dead close to their homes, where they erected monuments to them.[107] They were fond of long sermons lasting for two or three hours, during which they were entertained by the *Catenars* with stories which often had little bearing on the feast which they were observing.[108] They commenced their prayers, and ended them, with the sign of the Cross, which they did from right to left.[109]

The people contributed according to their means to the building of the churches, the construction of which, however, could not be undertaken without the bishop laying the foundation stone and blessing it.[110] The churches were usually very spacious but did not have any officer to look after them and keep them tidy. They were, in consequence, full of dust and covered over with cobwebs, and were also very poorly ornamented.[111] This may have been due to the fact that the people were not required to regularly subscribe for their upkeep, being content with surrendering a tenth part of their wives' portion when they were married, which amount was partly credited to the church funds and partly paid to the priests.[112] These church funds were deposited in the hands of the most respectable of the congregation.

These churches must have resembled Hindu places of worship in the neighbourhood. In fact, contrasting the churches built by Friar Vincent "after our style," Gouvea, writing in 1606, actually says that the old churches of the St. Thomas Christians "were built after the fashion of heathen pagodas."[113] None of the old surviving churches—Thiruvancode, Mailakonu, Kundara, Kallupara, Chengannur,[114] and Kothamangalam[115]—however, is

[106] *Diamper*, Session VIII, Decree XXXI. [107] Antão, *loc. cit.*

[108] *Ibid.* [109] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 22, pp. 73-74.

[110] Antão, *op. cit.*, Doc. I, p. 149.

[111] *Diamper*, Session VIII, Decree XXVII ; Souza, *op cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 22, p. 74.

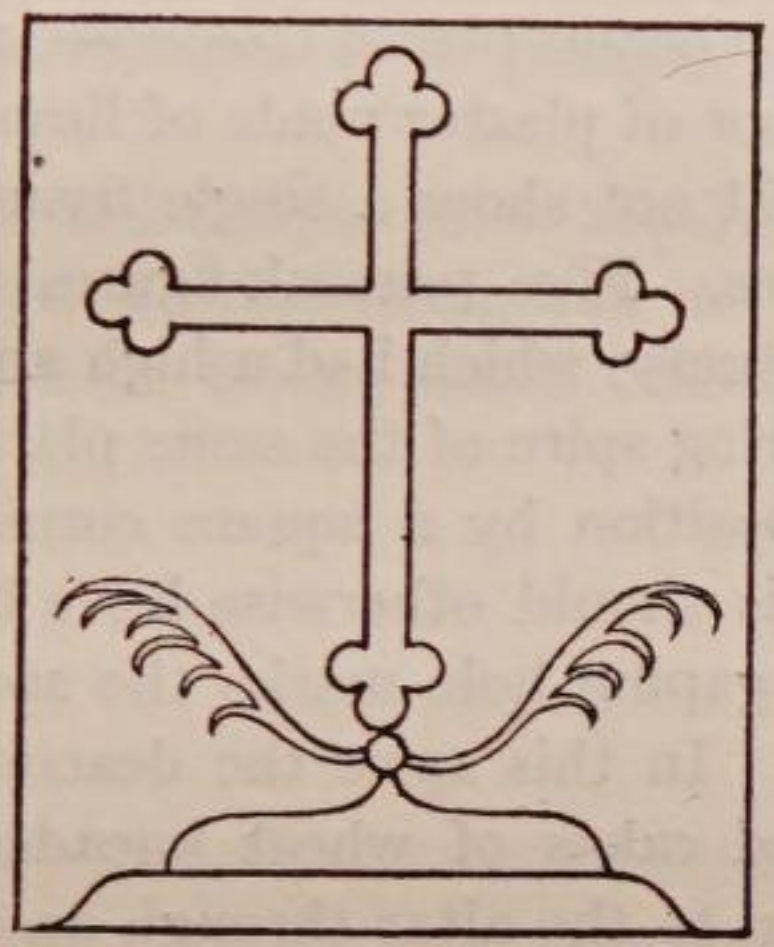
[112] *Diamper*, Session IX, Decree XIV.

[113] Gouvea, *Jornada*, cited by Daniel, "Rome and the Malabar Church," *KSP*, vol. II, series II, p. 330.

[114] Hambye, "The Syrian Church in India," *The Clergy Monthly*, vol. XVI, p. 388.

[115] Abraham, "The Old Church at Kothamangalam," *KSP*, vol. II, series 2, p. 277.

true to this description, except perhaps the one at Thiruvancode. Moreover, what with repairs and renovations, it is extremely difficult to determine the age of what is still left of the original structure. Fortunately, there is a trustworthy description of the church, as it stood on the tomb of St. Thomas, by Gaspar Correa, as he saw it, on his visit to Mylapore in 1522. Judging from this description, the doors were carved with crosses on petal forms, thus:



The church was laid out from east to west, which, being the Chaldean pattern,[116] the other churches also may have conformed to it. These churches were so patterned because of the Nestorian precept that the congregation face the east while praying. In his *The Book of the Pearl*, Mar 'Ābhd Īshō thus seeks to explain this practice:

> The custom of worshipping towards the East is the subject of an apostolic canon, and is founded upon that saying of Our Blessed Lord: "As the lightning cometh forth from the East and shineth towards the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." And because of that day and of that hour knoweth no man, neither the angels of heaven, it becometh us ever to be on the watch, with our faces turned towards the promise of his coming. This custom is therefore profitable in two ways; first because it stirs up the remembrance of the end, and of the judgement to come, which is a preservative against evil; and, secondly, because it brings to our mind our old place from which we were

[116] Hambye, *loc. cit.*

driven out on account of our sins, viz., Paradise, which is situated in the East, and thereby we are led to lay hold in repentance.[117]

Within, there were three navés formed by two sets of stays, five each, running breadthwise, from west to east, following the same Chaldean plan, each of the successive sections being for women, men, and the choir, respectively. The stays forming the naves were ornamented with motifs in vogue in the locality. Above the props were heavy beams placed crosswise, and over this timber-work there was a floor of plaster made of lime and sand, as strong as stone, since it did not show a single fissure or crevice, which was paved with tiles. Five peacock-figures marked off the last nave from the sanctuary, which had a high and vaulted roof, surmounted by a towering spire of the same plaster. The top of the spire was held in position by a square cornice, on which was a round cornice. This should otherwise have borne a weathercock or a Cross, since a gaping hole marks the spot. Below the spire was the high altar. In this spire the deacons, and those in the minor Orders, baked cakes of wheat kneaded with oil and salt, which they let down to the altar through an opening, placed in a little basket of fresh palm leaves.[118] Since these Christians would not admit images on principle, the altar had no other figure than the Cross, which they adored with singular devotion. In fact, during the early period of their contact with the Portuguese, they were surprised to see these latter using images in their worship, and remarked that St. Thomas had expressly forbidden them to do so. The churches, however, had fonts kept either outside the entrance,[119] or to the right of the sanctuary.[120]

Living among the non-Christians, some at least could not help being influenced by the notions widely held by the people around them. Some of them believed in the theory of *karma*, namely, that the souls after death are reborn as human beings or as beasts. They also believed in fatalism, holding that men are compelled to be what they are—a belief which led to the denial of free will, and further, that one religion was as good as another. Again, consistent with popular prejudice among the higher castes, they

[117] Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 413.
[118] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 21, p. 73.
[119] Correa, *Lendas da India*, vol. II, p. 723.
[120] *Documentacão*, vol. III, p 549; Fr. Penteado to the king.

would not mix with people of the humbler echelons of society, and would wash themselves when they happened to brush against one of the latter.[121] Some of them even frequented the temples, offering sacrifices or performing other ceremonies such as *Tollicanum, Ollicanum, Bellicorum, Conum,*[122] while still others carried with them inscriptions intended as a panacea against illness, or hung them in the necks of cattle to keep them well and placed them in the orchards so that the trees may bear fruit in abundance.[123] Indeed, as the late T. K. Joseph has observed:

> Before the Synod of Diamper (A.D. 1599) and for a long time after that the Syrian Christians had no objection to make offerings to temples or taking oaths before them.[124]

[121] *Diamper*, Session VIII, Decree XIII.
[122] *Diamper*, Session IX, Decree VII.
[123] *Diamper*, Decree VIII.
[124] *KSP*, series II, p. 77, note 25.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS AND THE PORTUGUESE

When the king of Portugal sent out his men on the quest of the sea-route to the Indies, one of his most urgent instructions to these explorers was that they should diligently search for Christians in all those remote regions lying on their route. How profoundly the religious aspect of their mission inspired these pioneers is evident from the instinctive reply of the very first Portuguese whom, on reaching Calicut, Vasco da Gama sent ashore on August 21, 1498. When angrily interrogated by the Muslims :

> Al diabro que to doo ! Quen te traxo acá ?

He answered that they had come to seek Christians and spices :

> Vimos buscar cristãos e especiaria.[1]

Vasco da Gama was, therefore, pleasantly surprised when, on his route to India, he was greeted at Melinda, on the east coast of Africa, with a salute of guns from four ships riding at anchor at this port, and was joyfully accosted with the beloved words "Christe! Christe!" These ships belonged to Indian Christians (Cristãos da India), who could have been none other than the Christians of St. Thomas, the carriers of overseas trade in those days along with the Muslims. They must have rejoiced at the prospect of speedy restoration of contact with the Christian West, contact which had been interrupted for centuries by Kawait-i-Islam lording it over the countries of the Middle East. They celebrated this historic meeting of the faithful with becoming éclat, the festivities being kept up in the true Indian style with display of fireworks and booming of guns from the ships. These Christians, when they first came on board to pay their respects to the commander, were shown a picture of Our Lady with Jesus in her arms at the foot of the Cross surrounded by the Apostles. At the sight of the *Pietà*

[1] *Diario da viagem de Vasco da Gama*, pp. 59-60.

they fell to the ground, and during the time that the fleet was there they came daily to say their prayers on board, bringing spices as offering.[2]

On reaching India, however, da Gama would seem to have deliberately refrained from seeking out the Christians. He was disappointed at the cold reception he was accorded by the ruler of Calicut, the Zamorin, and avoided any demonstration of fellow-feeling towards his co-religionists for fear of rousing the suspicion of the powers that be against the Christian minority. But there was nothing to discourage Pedro Alvares Cabral, who headed the next Portuguese expedition to India in 1500, in his efforts for a *rapprochement* with the St. Thomas Christians. Driven from Calicut as a result of the hostility of the Zamorin, he had turned to the king of Cochin, the Zamorin's rival, and, in the friendly atmosphere of this town, there was no need to observe any reserve. The Portuguese freely fraternized with their Indian brethren, and the relations between them grew so intimate that two of these Christians, the brothers Matthias and John, successfully prevailed on Cabral to take them to Portugal. They wanted to go on a pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem and then visit their patriarch at Antioch. Matthias died in Portugal, but John was able to proceed on his journey to Italy. At Venice he was lionized by the citizens who were curious to know something of Christianity reputed to have been planted by St. Thomas, the Apostle. The information which he supplied was incorporated by Fracan-Montalboddo in his book, now extremely rare, which he published in 1507 in Venetian Italian :

Paesi nouamente retrouati et Novo Mondo da Alberico
Vesputio Florentino intitulato,

with the colophon :

Stampato in Vicentia con la impensa de Magistro Henrico
Vincentino & diligente cura & industria de Zanmaria suo
fiol nel MCCCCCCVII a/di III de Nouembre.[3]

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] It is, therefore, not strictly accurate to say, as Barros does, that a whole volume was compiled entitled *Novus Orbis* from the information he gave them. This volume was "an unreliable Latin translation with essential

The relations between the Portuguese and the Christians took a somewhat political turn in 1502 when Vasco da Gama came on his second voyage to India. At Cochin he received a deputation of these St. Thomas Christians. They complained to him that they were being persecuted by the non-Christians among whom they lived, and the community was in danger of being completely destroyed. They begged of da Gama to take them under his protection, and save the Christian people, who were a memorial to the work and martyrdom of St. Thomas. In return they offered their allegiance to da Gama as the representative of one of the most Catholic and powerful kings of Christendom. And as a token of their submission, they offered him what they had always prized as their valued possession, the rod of justice. This was the sceptre of their own royal family which had by then become extinct. This rod was coloured red, and appeared like a sceptre. It was also embellished with silver at both the ends, one of which had three silver bells attached to it.

Vasco da Gama was highly pleased with their offer of allegiance and assured them that it was his mission to look after the interests of the Christians wherever they be. He knew the oppressive conditions under which they lived, but regretted his inability, owing to shortness of time, to do anything at the moment to assuage their distress. He, however, promised that he would leave instructions with one of his captains, who was then at Cananore, and that they should have recourse to this captain in case of need. He also told them that he would move the king of Portugal on their behalf and they could confidently expect a royal writ by the very first fleet to leave Portugal, with which writ they would be consoled. And in order that they may go satisfied with the result of their deputation, he made them the present of a sword.[4]

changes, additions and omissions," published by Simon Grynaeus (Basileae) in 1532. The original gives an account of the voyage of Alouise da Ca da Mosto to West Africa in 1463, an account of the voyage of Vasco da Gama to India and of the Indian countries, in 1497, of the voyage of Cabral in 1500, of those of Columbus and Vespucci, and finally, in the Sixth Book, some contemporary letters from Lisbon about Cabral's voyage, "to which the editor adds chapters 229-242 about Joseph, the Indian, according to the relations of those who conversed with him during his stay in Venice." Schurhammer, "The Malabar Church and Rome," *KSP*, series II, 11, p. 292.

[4] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada I, liv. VI, pp. 62-65.

Vasco da Gama was as good as his word. There is no doubt that it was at his instance that D. Manuel wrote a letter to one of these Christians, also named Matthias, who was possibly the leader of the deputation. Matthias was a man of substance. Two years later he was found supplying a cargo of spices to a number of ships in the Portuguese fleet homeward bound.[5] In his letter the Portuguese monarch promised succour to these ancient Christians. And on their behalf Matthias thanked him for the help that he had so generously promised, saying, "All of us were in need of (learning) many things (of the Faith) which we did not know; nor had we teachers to teach them to us. But God opened for us this route which permits your people to come to this country for the salvation of our souls."[6]

The appearance of the Portuguese in Malabar, with considerable military power, was indeed a great encouragement to this Christian minority, threatened with extinction by the power, numbers and wealth of the followers of the Crescent, who were in league with the Hindu princes of the Malabar coast. Thus it was that when the Bishops Mar Yahb Alaha, Mar Denha, Mar Thomas, and Mar Jacob, who had been sent by the Catholicos of the East Syrians in Mesopotamia to govern this Indian Christian community, landed in Malabar in 1503, they wrote to the Catholicos in the most enthusiastic terms of the Portuguese:

> Let it be also known to you O Fathers, that the King of the Christians of the West, who are the Franks, our brethren, sent to this country powerful ships, and they were a whole year on the sea before they reached us. They came in a southerly direction on the other side of the country of Ethiopia, that is to say, Habash (=negroes), and they arrived at this country of India, where they bought pepper and other similar spices, and then returned to their country. Then they studied the way and learned it well. Thereupon the above-mentioned King, may God preserve his life, sent six large ships which reached the town of Calicut in six months, because they had studied and learned the sea-route. Now in the town of Calicut there are many Mohammedans, whom envy has enraged and maddened against the Christians. They accused them before the pagan King, uttered lies concerning them and said: "These men have

[5] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 26.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.

come from the West, and have seen thy country and thy beautiful towns; they will return to their King and they will bring numerous armies on ships against thee; they will besiege thee, and take thy country from thee."

The pagan King listened to the words of the Mohammedans and yielded to their wish. Like a madman he rose and killed all the above-named Franks who were in his town, to the number of seventy men, with five pious priests who were with them, because they do not travel anywhere without priests. The remainder of the men, who were on the ships, went by sea with great grief and bitter weeping to the neighbourhood of our Christians, to a town called Cochin, which had also a pagan King. When he noticed that they were in great trouble and sorrowful pain, he summoned them to him, comforted them, and swore to them that he would not betray them even in order to save his own life. But when the impious King who had massacred their companions heard this, he was incensed, and he mustered a great army and went forth against them. The Franks, and the King with whom they were, escaped to a fort on the shores of the sea, where they remained a few days.

Then Christ had pity on them and many ships arrived from the country of the Franks who waged a severe war against the King of Calicut. They threw at him hard stones with ballistas, and killed many people from the camp of that wicked King; they made him run, and they drove him and his armies away from the shores of the sea. Then the Franks came to the town of Koshi, and they built in it a great fortress, in which were placed about three hundred warriors from them; some of them were stone throwers with machines and some others, archers. They also put in it about fifty large ballistas, and about a hundred others of a smaller size, and iron bows from which arrows are thrown.

Then that King, their enemy, whose memory deserves to perish, came back against them, and engaged them in battle, but they defeated him by the power of Christ, and killed about three thousand men from his army by stones from ballistas. He fled again, and went back to his town of Calicut; but the Franks pursued him on the sea which is near his town and overtook him; they seized his ships and broke them, and killed in them about one hundred Mohammedans who were piloting them; they

also destroyed the town with stones thrown at it from their ballistas. The General of these Franks came then to another town called Cananore, situated in the country of Malabar, to another pagan King, and said to him: "Give us a place in thy town, in which we can buy and sell when we come here year by year to do business." He gave them a place and a large house, and was greatly pleased with them. The Christian General made him then gifts of cloth woven with gold, and garments of brocade and bought pepper to the extent of fourteen thousand *tagars*, which he took with him to his country.[7]

On disembarking at Cananore the bishops were welcomed by the Factor and treated with heart-warming Portuguese hospitality. And so the grateful prelates reported to the Catholicos:

> There were about twenty men from them in the town of Cananore; we went to them and told them that we were Christians, and narrated to them our story. They were pleased with us and gave us beautiful garments, with twenty drachmas of gold; for the sake of Christ they honoured, in an extraordinary way, our state of being strangers. We remained with them two and a half months, and they ordered us one day to say Mass. They have prepared for themselves a beautiful place, like a chapel, and their priests say their Mass in it every day, as is their custom. On the Sunday, therefore, of *Nusardail*, after their priest had finished his Mass, we also went and said Mass, at which they were greatly pleased with us. After that we left them and went to our Christians, who were eight days' distant from there.
>
> The number of all these Franks amounted to not more than about four hundred men, but their fear and dread is in the heart of all the pagans and Mohammedans found in these countries. The country of those Franks is called Portugal, which is one of the countries of the Franks, and their King is called Emmanuel. May Emmanuel protect him![8]

Nothing much is heard of the bishops during this early period.

[7] Mingana, "Early Spread of Christianity in India," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. X, no. 2 (1926), pp. 39-41.

[8] *Ibid*

According to the information supplied to João de Barros, two of the bishops, Mar Yahb Alaha and Mar Denha, died soon after their arrival.[9] Mar John, who had been in Malabar before them, since 1490-91, either preceded or followed them to the grave,[10] and Mar Jacob and Mar Thomas divided the jurisdictions between themselves and established their Sees at Quilon and Cranganore, respectively.[11]

These were the capitals of the two kingdoms situated one to the north and the other to the south of Cochin. According to an estimate made at this time there were 30,000 Christians in Cranganore[12] and 12,000 households in Quilon.[13] Quilon was considered as the more important of the two cities. Writing about it in his *Oriente Conquistado*, Fr. de Souza has observed: "As Coulão was the most noble city in ancient times, the Malabarians are accustomed to reckon their era from its foundation, as the Romans from the foundation of Rome and the year in which I write this (i.e., his book), which is 1698, should be counted 8767 of the foundation of Coulão." And he adds the information that when the Portuguese went to the city to purchase pepper, the Christians of St. Thomas recognized them by the sign of the Cross, which they made, and they treated them with special kindness.[14]

There stood upon the rocks near the sea-shore, a stone pillar, which, according to popular belief, had been erected by St. Thomas himself. Speaking of this pillar in his letter to the General of the Society of Jesus, dated January 12, 1579, Fr. A. Monserrate observes:

> The tradition is, and it is the common saying, that St. Thomas erected at Coulan a pillar (*marco*) on some stones, from which the sea was then about half a league distant, saying that, when the sea should reach that pillar, white Christians would come, who would reduce them to following the law which he was preaching.[15] On the one hand, what makes one think that this is

[9] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada III, liv. VII, p. 236.
[10] Souza, *Oriente Conquistado*, 2, 1, 2, 16, p. 69.
[11] Barros, *loc. cit.*
[12] *Ibid.*, Decada I, liv VI, p. 62.
[13] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 100.
[14] Souza, *loc. cit.*
[15] "The same thing," says Fr. Hosten, "was said for St. Thomas at Mylapore though we have no allusion to the existence of such a pillar close to the

true is that the stone of the pillar is different from the stone generally obtained in India, for it is white, and like salt, and much weather-beaten, and for half a league from there all is stones and shells, showing that the sea has not since long covered this space of ground. On the other hand, what makes one doubt is what we read in the histories of the discovery of India: that, wherever the Portuguese first landed they set up pillars, and, as they came discovering the coast, it is probable that they should have erected this one; indeed, this sort of stone is found in Portugal and enough time has elapsed to make it possible for it to be so worn.[16] But I rather think that that pillar is from before the time of the arrival of the Portuguese. Now, whether St. Thomas put it up or Mar Thoma, God knows.[17]

Among the churches at Quilon there was a very old one which was believed to have been miraculously built by the Apostle himself. Duarte Barbosa, the Portuguese Factor at Cochin, who had heard this from the Christians, narrates the circumstances under which the Saint came to build it:

church of the Saint's tomb. Already in 1329, Friar Jordan of Sévérac could write from Thana that the Indians were eagerly looking out for deliverers from the West, for the Latins. Why, said they, should the Pope not launch a few ships on the Indian Ocean and keep in check the daily inroads of Muhammadanism?" Hosten, "Thomas Cana and his Copper-plate Grant," *IA.*, vol. LVI, p. 123, note 6.

[16] Fr. Hosten, commenting on this observation of Monserrate, notes: "If this pillar had been a padrão set up by the Portuguese, it would have had some distinctive marks, like those which have been discovered in various places: for instance the arms of Portugal, or date. Now, the Quilon pillar has never been described as having anything distinctive. It is said that it disappeared only in the nineteenth century. Surely, the pillar was not the one erected by Friar John of Marignolli about 1347: his pillar was somewhere at or near Cape Comorin." Hosten, *loc. cit.*, note 7. Baldaeus, the Dutch writer, saw that pillar in 1662. As he says: "Upon the rocks near the sea-shore of Coulam, stands a stone pillar, erected there, as the inhabitants report, by St. Thomas. I saw the pillar in 1662." *Travancore Manual*, vol. II, p. 147. During the period when Day wrote his *Land of the Perumals*, (p. 212), this pillar still existed. But it disappeared towards the close of the nineteenth century, and as Howard, in his *Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*, (p. 9), note, says: "Mr. D'Albedhyll, the Master Attendant at Quilon, told me that he has seen this pillar and that it was washed away only a few years ago." *Travancore Manual, loc. cit.*; Hosten, *loc. cit.*

[17] A. Monserrate to the General of the Society of Jesus, Cochin, January 12, 1579, cited in Hosten, *loc. cit*

He arrived at the city of Coilam (all there being Heathen) in poor attire, and thenceforward he began to convert some poor folk to our holy Faith. He took with him some companions who were natives of the land. One day as he was going about the city at daybreak a great log of wood from the sea was seen in the harbour and grounded on the strand. Tidings of this were forthwith brought to the King, who sent many men and elephants to draw it to the land, but they could not move it, and when the King ordered that they should do everything in their power to draw it forth, yet they had no power to do so. The Blessed Saint Thomas then perceiving that they had no hope of moving it, went to the King and said to him that he would draw forth the log to the land on condition that the King would give him a piece of land whereon he might build a church in honour of the Lord who had sent him thither. Whereat the King laughed and said that if he, with all his might, could not make it stir, how could the Saint be bold enough to drag it out. Saint Thomas replied that he would draw it out by God's power, which was very great. The King then ordered that all the land of which he had need should be given to him, and this being done and the grant made out, he went there where the log lay and bound it to a rope with which, by divine grace, he began to draw it to the land without help from any person, and this same log came behind him to the spot where he would build his church. The King having witnessed this notable miracle then ordered that he should do whatever he would with that wood and the land which he had given him (treating him) with all honour and favour, and holding him to be a Saint. Many men of that land became Christians, but the King would not. The Apostle, whom they called *Matoma*, then ordered that all the carpenters and sawyers in the land should be called together, and began to fashion the wood, which was of such a size that it sufficed to build the church, and so it was done. It is the custom among the Moors and Indians that when the workmen come to begin any work they give them a certain quantity of rice to eat, and when they depart at night they give them a *fanam* each. The Blessed Saint Thomas at midday took the measure wherewith the rice was to be measured and to every man he gave it full of sand, and it was turned into good rice and when they departed at night

he gave every man a chip of wood, and it became a *fanam*. Thus the work was accomplished and all the workmen were well pleased. Beholding these miracles and many others, which Our Lord daily worked through him, many became Christians from Cochin to the great Kingdom of Coilam. . . .[18]

When the Portuguese arrived in India, Quilon was under the rule of its Queens, who were assisted in the administration of the state by the governors. Moved by the prosperity which the Portuguese had brought to Cochin, these governors wished to enter into commercial relations with the new-comers. They promised to supply them with pepper and spices at cheaper rates than he could obtain at Cochin. Pedro Alvares Cabral, however, declined their offer, as the merchandise which he had taken was already too much for his ships to admit of a further supply.[19] When Vasco da Gama came to India a second time in 1502, Quilon renewed its offer to supply pepper and spices on the same terms and conditions as had been granted to the king of Cochin. Da Gama was afraid that this might embroil him with Cochin and excused himself from accepting the invitation, on the ground that the terms of his recent engagement with the latter did not allow him to come to a settlement with any other power without its concurrence.[20] He nevertheless granted *cartazes* or permits to the merchants of Quilon, which enabled them to carry on maritime commerce without Portuguese interference.[21] These *cartazes* were actually issued by the Factor of Cochin before whom they presented themselves, armed with an *ola* or certificate from their government. Albuquerque, in 1503, acceded to the request of the Quilon government for establishing friendly relations. He opened a factory at Quilon and appointed Antonio de Sa as Factor. Albu-

[18] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 98-100. Another legend which the Portuguese heard from the lips of the bishop himself was that in this church there lay the remains of the Indian sybil who foretold the nativity of the Messiah. A Perumal King of Ceylon having heard tell of it from the sybil, embarked in a ship for Muscat. At this port he joined the other Magi and they went to Bethlehem to adore the Child. The Indian Magus brought from Bethlehem an image of the Blessed Virgin, which image he offered to the sybil and which, together with her, was buried in her sepulchre. Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada III, liv VII, p. 236.

[19] Danvers, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 72.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[21] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 298, 318-20.

querque too found that the Christians were not well treated and accordingly in the treaty which was signed between the parties in that year, it was stipulated that the administration of justice among the Christians of the land should be vested in the Portuguese Factor. This clause was not inserted with the view of interfering with the internal affairs of Quilon but was intended to give effective protection to the Christians.[22]

There was at Quilon another church dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy, believed to have been miraculously built by two Saints who lay buried in it in two chapels. The church had three altars, with a cross in each of them, the cross on the middle altar being of gold and the other two of silver. The Christians offered to send one of them to the king, D. Manuel, and chose the one of gold for the purpose. Albuquerque, instead, chose one of silver, saying that he was going to take it as a token that "in those parts there were Christians who adored the cross on which Our Lord, Jesus Christ, suffered." And seeing the church rather bare and ill-supplied, he promised that on his arrival in Portugal he would use his good offices with the king to send them ornaments which could serve as decorations in their churches.

The Christians were pleased with this spontaneous gesture and requested Albuquerque for a picture of St. James and a bell. And when he promptly complied with their request, they wished that he left there someone who could instruct them in the rites of the holy Faith. Albuquerque, thereupon, prevailed upon Friar Roderigo of the Order of Preachers, who accompanied him, to remain behind. Friar Roderigo worked so hard that many Hindus were attracted to the Catholic fold by his fervent pleading and good example, and he baptized many unbaptized ones from among the Christians of thirty to forty years of age, as they did not remember if they had ever been baptized.

These Christians begged of Albuquerque saying, "just as he wanted them to persevere in their religion, so also he should reinstate them in the enjoyment of their right, namely, the right of the Christians who administered the church, to have in their keeping the Seal and the Weight of the city—of which right they had been deprived by the king of Quilon because of the failing and negligence of one of them. As these things, when they were in their charge, added to their status, he should speak to the Namboodiri and the govern-

[22] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

ors to restore to them the right, observing that the fault for which they had been penalized had been of one individual and not of them all." Albuquerque replied that what they were requesting him to do had not been included among the terms of the treaties and that the time was too short for starting negotiations all over again, as he was ready to sail. He, however, assured them that he would leave word with Antonio de Sa, the Factor, that he should pursue the matter with the king as soon as he returned from the war, urging him, in the name of the king of Portugal, that he should accede to the demand.[23]

The Christians were so pleased with the concern of the Portuguese for their welfare that they made common cause with their co-religionists when these latter broke with the government of Quilon. On being attacked by the troops the Portuguese, with forty St. Thomas Christians, together with the deacon, withdrew into the church. These Christians were told that they should come out of the building as the government had no quarrel with them but with the Portuguese. The Christians, however, replied that they would rather die with the Portuguese, on hearing which, the church was set on fire and they were all burnt to death.[24]

It had been expressly mentioned in this Treaty (1503) that no ship should be allowed to take spices until the Portuguese had received their lading. The Moors, who resented the conclusion of friendly relations with their commercial rivals, soon had a Portuguese slain in a street brawl, in consequence of which, Duarte Pacheco, Captain of the factory of Cochin, went to Quilon threatening to close down the factory.[25] The Queen, conscious of the severe chastisement inflicted by the Portuguese on the Zamorin of Calicut, begged him not to close it. The factory, however, was too feeble to afford protection to the Portuguese when the crowd, incited by the Muslims, often attacked them. There was therefore the need of building a stronger fortification, but the blue-water policy of Francisco de Almeida, which was against the dispersal of the Portuguese forces among the various fortifications on land, would not permit their construction. According to this policy the more numerous the fortresses, the weaker would be the Portuguese power, which should be founded on the

[23] Baião, *Commentarius do Grande Afonso de Albuquerque*, pt. I, pp. 14-15.
[24] Souza, *loc. cit.*
[25] Danvers, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 114.

sea.[26] In consequence, the building of the fort at Quilon had to await the governorship of Afonso de Albuquerque. Heitor Rodrigues was sent to Quilon for this purpose and he succeeded in building a real fort, duly provided with artillery, in Quilon. The Queen was displeased at their proceeding, but with the arrival of the Portuguese fleet in September 1515, she adopted a more pacific attitude. This was a great blessing to the local Christians, who could take shelter when hostilities broke out between the Portuguese and the local government.[27]

When in 1516, Lopo Suares de Albergaria, the Portuguese governor, entered into a treaty with Quilon, he obtained a guarantee of personal safety for the Christians from the government of Quilon. It was laid down in this treaty that the churches of St. Thomas should be re-built on the same sites where they had been burnt down.[28] By a subsequent treaty of November 17, 1520, Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, was able to exact further concessions. The government of Quilon agreed to restore their income to the churches and not to discriminate against the Christians, who were to be granted sufficient land at the foot of the Portuguese fortress where they could settle. They were also accorded the freedom to sojourn where they would and that conversions from Hinduism to Christianity should be untrammelled.[29]

Cranganore, like Quilon, is prominently associated with the early beginnings of Christianity in India. In the time of Martim Afonso de Souza, there came to light two copper-plates which contain the privileges said to have been granted to the Christians in the days of the Apostle himself. In 1543, Pero Sequeira, being the Treasurer in the Portuguese factory at Cochin, there came to him the Chaldean Bishop Jacob, who used to be maintained by the Franciscans in their monastery of St. Anthony. He looked rather ill and passed away shortly thereafter. As he was friendly with Sequeira, the latter visited him as and when he could. On one of these occasions the bishop confided to him that, finding himself without means, he pawned, with a person who was then no more, from the Christian settlements of the heaths not very far from the city, two copper-plates, for twenty *cruzados*. These

[26] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 906.
[27] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 403.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 407.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 408

documents contained the privileges which the kings of Cranganore had granted to the Christians of St. Thomas. The bishop entreated of him to redeem them, and to keep them with him until such time that the Christians of Cranganore should pay the sum owing to him. Pero Sequeira acquiesced in his request and retrieved the copper-plates with the help of an indigenous priest, the Secretary of Bishop Jacob. Governor Martim de Souza endeavoured to have them read, sending far and near for scholars to see if they could decipher them, until at last he was told of a Jew from the heaths, versed in languages. Using the good offices of the rajah of Cochin for the purpose, Martim sent the copper-plates to the Jewish scholar, who, with great difficulty, was able to make out their meaning. They were written in three different scripts—Chaldean, Malabar, and Arab—in a most antiquated style. Moreover, the significance could be understood only by combining the words in one with corresponding words in the others. The Jew succeeded in giving an account which was sent to the king, D. João III. The privileges they contained were the grant of a piece of land for the construction of a church—the Apostle himself built this church on the site around which the Portuguese built their fort; exemption from the payment of taxes to all Christians who should settle in the environs of Cranganore, and lastly, grant by the Christians for the maintenance of the church—of one-fifth (20 per cent) of the duty on goods brought to the port of Cranganore for the purpose.[30]

St. Thomas seems to have been held in high esteem by non-Christians no less than by Christians. Diogo de Couto, the Portuguese historian, describes a curious practice, scrupulously observed by the Hindus in his day, when they passed in procession before the church of St. Thomas at Cranganore. He writes :

Because the feast of this pagoda of Parui follows that of the blessed Apostle St. Thomas, it is appropriate to give an account of it as it would redound to the praise and glory of the Saint, and also because, unhappily among Christians, no feast is celebrated with such solemnity. This pagoda, which is called Parui, is so ancient that long before the birth of Christ, it was already the best known for pilgrimages, crowds of people coming to it from all parts of the country. Its feast was celebrated

[30] Gois, *op. cit.*, pt. I, pp. 216-17.

in the month of March, on which occasion there gathered the majority of the Hindus from the neighbouring kingdoms. There were so many ships there on the day of the feast, which coincides with the conjunction of the planets, that the river is literally crowded with ships loaded with the pilgrims, and, on reaching the pagoda (which is four leagues up the river of Cranganore), they celebrate the festival and perform the ceremonies, and offer their gifts which bring so much income that the king of Cranganore, on this account, has always been reckoned the richest among the princes of Malabar. Now, when St. Thomas, in the course of his journey across these parts, preaching the law of grace, and winning over a large number of Hindus, also came to this kingdom of Cranganore, he reaped a great harvest here as well, baptizing the largest number of Hindus of whom there is even now a goodly number descended from these early Christians. The Saint built at the place (where after so many centuries, we built our fortress) a church which is to this day, within the fort. After the church was built, the pilgrims happening to pass before it in procession on the day of their feast, immediately there arose, of a sudden, a storm in which most of the ships were sunk carrying with them most of the people. These unsuspecting Hindus, seeing these shipwrecks occur over the years, the like of which had never befallen them in previous years, began to feel that this was the punishment of the Holy Apostle who was enraged against them for passing in front of his church, carrying offerings to their pagoda. And desiring to propitiate him, they constructed, over high towers, magnificent castles of wood, beautifully carved, consisting of eleven stories, from which, according to the means of those who made them, there issued forth, from every storey, rings carrying illuminations, and the pilgrims who went in them were attired in gala clothes and accompanied by musicians and dancers. In this manner they were drawn up to the river in silence, but, when the procession passed before the church of the Holy Apostle, they lit all the lamps, they shouted with joy at the top of their voice, so much so, that it appeared as if the river and the land would be undone by their cries. As they came to the spot, however, which they feared was dangerous, all their merrymaking would cease all of a sudden. They would extinguish the lights for fear of offending the Holy Apostle if they went to the pagoda

with the lights burning. If any year someone imagined that it would not be possible to negotiate the tide by night, as has happened sometimes, they would, another day, attempt the passage of the river at sunrise and, on that day, while the procession passed before the church of the blessed Apostle, a man, standing at the top of the castle with a knife in his hand, would wound himself in the head while promising the Saint that he would make for him a more costly castle for the coming year—if he gave them free passage. This they do and demonstrate thereby his majesty and greatness because they really believe that the Saint did not allow them to pass, as he had done on other occasions, because he was offended by them.[31]

Unlike the Christians of Quilon those of Cranganore had to be wary in maintaining friendly relations with the Portuguese. The rajah was a vassal of the Zamorin of Calicut, and situated as his fief was between Calicut and Cochin, he was obliged to give free passage to the troops of his overlord marching against the rajah of Cochin, who with the powerful support of the Portuguese, was successfully resisting his efforts to bring him to obedience. When in 1505 Lopo Soares and Duarte Pacheco found that the Zamorin had united his forces with those of Cranganore with a view to launch a combined attack on Cochin, they made a surprise landing at Cranganore, and having routed the Zamorin, they gave the city to flames. The Christians were in a panic seeing that their two churches in the city, those of Our Lady and the Apostle, were in imminent danger of being burnt, and they begged of the Portuguese to assist them in putting out the fire—a request which the Portuguese promptly acquiesced in.[32]

The king of Cochin feared that the Zamorin would never desist from his efforts, and prevailed on the viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, to construct a fort at a strategic point at the mouth of the Cranganore river, from which the passage of hostile troops across the river could be effectively prevented. Cranganore was also the main emporium for pepper, from which Calicut drew its main supply. Almeida therefore agreed to the proposal of the rajah of Cochin and constructed a fort at the spot, and placed it under the command of Luis Alvares, with a small platoon.[33] This state

[31] Couto, *op. cit.*, Decada VII, liv. VII, cap. XIV, pp. 290-93.
[32] Gois, *op. cit.*, p. 213. [33] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 737-38.

of affairs lasted till 1524, when the ruler of Cranganore, seeing the neighbouring state of Cochin flourishing under the Portuguese patronage, entered into an alliance with the rajah of Cochin. The Zamorin, thereupon, pounced upon Cranganore, set fire to the city, reducing the church of St Thomas to ashes in the general conflagration. The rajah of Cranganore petitioned to Dom Luis Menezes, the Portuguese Admiral, for help ; the Admiral merely shed crocodile tears on the burning of the church, but would do nothing on the ground that he was ignorant of the alleged alliance concluded between the kings of Cochin and Cranganore. Nor would he consent to assist these Christians even though urged to do so by Rafael Catanho, a Portuguese traveller who had just come from China.[34] The Christians were, therefore, much delighted at the arrival of Vasco da Gama, who came to India for the third time in 1524. Earlier, in 1502, when he came to India a second time, he had shown himself to be a particular friend of these Christians. Evil days had fallen on the Christians in the meanwhile and they complained to him that their church, before which the Hindus were wont to observe a time-honoured protocol when they went in a procession in their castles on turrets to fulfil their vows, on the day of their feast, had been burnt. Vasco da Gama promised to rebuild the church and also a fortified tower attached thereto for their defence. But as he died in the same year, he was not able to fulfil his promise. His successor, D. Henrique de Menezes, whom they approached next, lent a sympathetic ear to their request, but he too dying shortly after, nothing was attempted in the direction of building the church or of raising the tower.[35] And after his death the dispute between Lopo-Vaz de Sampaio and Pero Mascarenhas occupied the attention of the Portuguese and the cause of the Christians of Cranganore was forgotten.

Besides the religious ties binding the Christians of Cranganore to the Portuguese, there were others of a commercial and an economic nature. The Christians of St. Thomas were also themselves middlemen who purchased pepper from other cultivators and sold it to the Moors, who in their turn resold it to the Portuguese. It is surprising that despite the friendly relations existing between the Christians and the Portuguese, this state of affairs dragged on for years, until at last, through the good offices of Fr. João Caro,

[34] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 785-86.

[35] *Documentacão*, vol. II, p. 177.

O.P., and of the Chaldean bishop of Cranganore, Jacome Abuna or Jacob, the Christians decided to sell pepper directly to the Portuguese. As Mar Jacob wrote to D. João III of Portugual (*ca.* 1524) :

> The Christians trembled before the Moors who spanked them and treated them as slaves for the reason, which they falsely alleged, that the pepper had been dampened to give it additional weight, and would impress upon them that the Portuguese, if they approached them directly, would cheat them and even kidnap them and send them to Portugal as slaves. And this the Moors proved with the help of some bad Christians who enjoyed favour with them in the trade. As they failed to bring it, they were forced to sell it to the Moors, who were then alone carrying on this trade. And so, the Moors had it in their power with ample reason to sell it dirty and soaking wet. For this reason Your ships had necessarily to be laden with such cargo as they gave them.

Mar Jacob further observes that he had prevailed upon his Christians not only to desist from selling their pepper to the Moors, but also to bring it clean and dry to the factory, and further says that he "has so far won them over to his cause, that in the event of his needing them, he would find over twenty-five thousand warriors prepared to enlist themselves in his service."[36]

In 1536, the proposal for a defensive and offensive alliance between Cranganore and Cochin was again mooted by the rajah of Cranganore. The Portuguese, when consulted, were favourably inclined towards it, but the king of Cochin was afraid that Cranganore being a recognized entrepôt for pepper, the Portuguese might transfer their interests there. The alliance, therefore, was not formally concluded. But matters were brought to a head by the announcement of his intention by the Zamorin to visit a celebrated temple in Cranganore. The rajah of Cranganore being a feudatory, it was obligatory for him to receive his overlord with due splendour. The rajah approached the Portuguese, and finding that they would do nothing without consulting the king of Cochin, he gave up all thoughts of the alliance and prepared to receive the Zamorin with due festivities.

The king of Cochin now dreaded the consequences of the close

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 353-54.

friendship between Cranganore and Calicut on account of the fact that the isle of Replim (Etapilli), off Cochin, would be easily accessible if Cranganore were friendly. The island was important from the point of view of Cochin because, among other sacred objects, it enshrined the stone which the Zamorin had to touch to be truly recognized as sovereign. This was not in the interest of Cochin, who feared that, in the event of the Zamorin succeeding in achieving his object, many of the feudatories, who had then acknowledged the overlordship of Cochin, would immediately transfer their allegiance to the Zamorin. The king of Cochin, therefore, invoked the treaty existing between the Portuguese and himself, and the former were soon involved in the squabble. The Zamorin visited his wrath on the St. Thomas Christians and burnt down their church dedicated to that Saint. The Portuguese thereupon entered the isle of Replim, and seizing the sacred stone handed it over to the king of Cochin. They strengthened their fortress at Cranganore, and placing it in the charge of Diogo Pereira, named it after St. Thomas.[37]

Now that the Christians themselves were showing an inclination to be instructed in the Faith, the Portuguese sovereign sent out Fr. Penteado charging him with the mission of bringing them into conformity with the Roman Church. But this priest found it very difficult to make them change their ways. As Fr. Gonçalves writing about the tenacity with which they clung to their creed, observes :

> What shall I say about the Christians whom our people (Portuguese) found in India ? It is as difficult to draw them away from their errors as it appears to them reasonable to sustain them, even though they receive Baptism and have priests who say Mass and they agree in many things with us.[38]

What attached them firmly to their church was the great esteem in which they held their bishops, the Patriarch of Babylon, taking great care to send out men of the highest worth and proved sanctity to India. As Fr. Penteado wrote :

[37] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 390-93.

[38] Gonçalves, *Primeira Parte da Historia dos Religiosos da Companhia de Jesus*, vol. I, pp. 91-92.

> The people accorded them more obedience and veneration than do all Christians put together to the Pope, which does not stop at kissing their feet.[39]

Speaking about one of these bishops, on the authority of a manuscript, Roz, the Jesuit Archbishop of Angamale and an ornament of his Order who knew Malayalam and Chaldean as his own mother-tongue, says that he actually resuscitated a sacristan who had died from a fall. This was Mar John, who adorned the diocese of Cranganore when the Portuguese first came to India.[40] Rather than offend Fr. Penteado by outright repudiation of the position of the Roman Church, these Christians told him diplomatically that they could not help having differences in the church because of their having been taught in twelve different ways by twelve apostles, in the same manner as customs are bound to vary among the English and the Germans from the Portuguese.[41] On one occasion, during the long absence of the *Catenar*, of the principal church of Cranganore, who had gone on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore, while Fr. Penteado stayed in the church, the people came to assist at his Mass, and were happy to learn from him of the Faith and to practise it, and also many children, because he caressed them, came, to the joy of their parents, to learn the Lord's Prayer. But when the *Catenar* arrived he was incensed at seeing him there, and asked him sharply what he was doing there and when he would leave that place. When Penteado replied that he did not want to leave, he did not receive it well and immediately the people and the young men, who attended his Mass, ceased to do so, and the children only came to search for something which, when he tried to give them, they would first make sure that they were not observed by the *Catenar*. Thus in the principal church of the city, says Penteado, "I was not permitted to celebrate."[42]

On another occasion when both he and the younger Bishop Thomas were at a christening of children, seeing the latter baptizing them using the Chaldean formula, but without salt and the episcopal chrism, Fr. Penteado baptized the same children, using the Latin rite, apparently in the belief that they had not been

[39] *Documentacão*, vol. III, p. 550.
[40] Souza, *op. cit.*, 2, 1, 2, 16, p. 69.
[41] *Documentacão, loc. cit*
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 546.

validly baptized. He also offered the Roman Mass at which the bishop was so infuriated that "in my opinion," says Fr. Penteado, "if he had the power he would have killed me, and said that only one of the two of us was their cleric, and that that cleric was certainly not myself, and he worked secretly through the Vicar and others that no one should receive sacraments from me."[43]

Under these circumstances the Catholic clergy came to the inevitable conclusion that so long as the Christians were served by the Babylonian Patriarchate, there was no chance of leading them to the Roman fold. As Fr. Antonio do Louro wrote to the king, in his letter of November 4, 1518, "from Cochin to Coulão is a rich mine and treasure of countless souls, but these Abunas (i.e., Syrian bishops) by whom they are instructed, ought to be slowly and gradually pushed out of India and be replaced by others."[44] In consequence, the Portuguese government made it its policy as far as it lay in its power, in course of time, to prevent the entry of these bishops into India. As D. João III of Portugal wrote in his letter of March 21, 1563 :

> I am informed that from Turkey and Persia have come certain white Jews who are prejudicial to the wholesomeness of the Faith, and the same is caused by certain schismatic bishops who come from Sorya to govern the Christians of St. Thomas. And because it would be of great service to Our Lord and to me to prevent these bishops and Jews from coming to these parts, I very much recommend that you explore the way in which this can be achieved. You should also alert the Archbishop of Goa and the Bishop of Cochin, writing to them, or in any other manner, as also the Fathers of the Society of Jesus.[45]

Fr. Penteado tried to bring these bishops on the pay-roll of the Portuguese. Bishop Jacob would seem to have agreed but Bishop Thomas resisted. Fr. Penteado also wanted that one of these bishops should retire, as one alone would be sufficient for the needs of the Christians. Mar Jacob was amenable to this suggestion but Mar Thomas proving refractory,[46] was deported to Hormuz,

[43] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 358-59.
[44] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 351.
[45] Gonçalves, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 154-55.
[46] Fr. Lourenço de Goes, writing to the king on December 28, 1536, that he was of *pouco ajuda*.

under orders of Governor Nuno da Cunha, but managed to escape from Goa, and returned to Cranganore.[47] Later, however, he reconciled himself to the situation, so that Fr. Mateus Dias, the Indian priest, writing to the king, on January 22, 1550, could say :

> There are here two of the Babylonian bishops who did everything in the Babylonian manner until Your Highness sent Fr. Alvaro Penteado who, with much diligence and fervour for the Catholic Faith, brought the two bishops to obedience to the Holy Mother, the Church, and made them receive the salary from Your Highness. They now do nothing according to the Babylonian custom and are very honest and obedient to the Holy Church.[48]

This task, however, could not be achieved without difficulty, and Fr. Penteado could achieve it only by degrees. There were naturally charges and counter-charges on the part of the Catholic missioners. Writing to the king, on December 16, 1527, Fr. Sebastião Pires complains :

> Your Highness has sent here a priest named Penteado. He does not seem to be quite fit to instruct them, for he is impetuous and irritable and the people, who have been Christians since the time of St. Thomas, are greatly dissatisfied with him ; and this they have told me many times, and in order to verify this, Your Highness has only to consider the fact that though he has been occupied with this work for ten years, he has not baptized a single person. Send me an order appointing me for this work and Your Highness will see what results I shall achieve in one year. These Christians are on good terms with me.[49]

In his turn, Fr. Penteado accuses Fr. Pires of not having helped him as he ought to have done in the correction of the excesses of certain priests on the Coromandel coast. As the coast is rich, a number of these clerics, forgetting their priestly character, had taken to trade, referring, in particular, to the case of an ex-Friar who had

[47] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
[48] *Documentacão*, vol. IV, pp. 477-78.
[49] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 143-44.

been going there as a merchant for six years.[50] Fr. Penteado's complaint that his mission did not receive the active encouragement and support that was due to it is confirmed by a letter of the interpreter, João Carcere, who complains to the king (January 2, 1529):

> These people would be very good Christians if they are instructed. Your Highness has already shown yourself solicitous in sending here Fr. Penteado for this purpose. The people of this country respect none save those who, according to them, are favoured by the Captain-General as also by the Captains of the fortresses; but this poor priest is so little favoured on account of the fact that they do not want to give him help, nor show him any consideration or count him as anything, that whatever he tells these Christians appears to them as false and without foundation. It is therefore necessary that in order that he may teach them, you command that he be favoured, in the absence of which these Christians will give him no hearing in matters of the Faith, which they give to none except to their bishops, who come from Armenia, because with the people of this country, no one can succeed but these bishops.[51]

As we have already noted, the difference between the Armenian bishops and the Catholic missioners started over the baptismal formula. These latter, having made representations to D. João III, he, in turn, requested Mar Jacob, to whom he was sending Fr. Penteado, the favour of letting him baptize the Christians of the country, while he sanctioned an annual sum of 20,000 *reis* for Jacob's maintenance, a sum he was paying to each Portuguese priest who was serving in India. Mar Jacob was fully persuaded of the validity of the baptismal formula used in his Church and, accordingly, he wrote in reply:

> Thou hast sent me a letter from the king, thy father—who rests in God—that I should take it as thine. Alvaro Penteado, brought it to me, he having been sent for this purpose, wherein it is said that thou hast ordered the favour of the annual payment of a provision of 20,000 *reis* to be made to me, the same as is enjoyed by the priests in India. And in the letter thou also

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48, Fr. Penteado to the king on January 16, 1528.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

> prayest that it be permitted to Alvaro Penteado, and the priests, whom thou art sending for the purpose, that they baptize the Christians of the country. As regards the alms, may God reward thee for it and I shall pay for it with prayers and serving thee better. As for Alvaro Penteado baptizing the Christians of the country, if thou orderest that this be permitted, because it appears to thee that I baptize in a form other than that which Jesus Christ, prescribed in the Gospel, as some have so informed thee, then thou canst ask for information of Fr. Master João Caro how thou hast been deceived in this. Do not think that I am so ignorant and know ever so little of the sacred Scriptures, old and new. As far as it concerns Baptism—though it may be granted that I am not well-read in the usages of the Popes and those of Rome, and if thou, in spite of this, insistest that this Alvaro Penteado should baptize with other priests—I should warn thee that in all likelihood, thou wilt forfeit the friendship of these Christians, for they have great faith in me and do not wish that anyone else should baptize them as long as I live. In the meanwhile, I shall take them with me until I receive thy answer, with a view to making these Christians familiar with them, and the said priests may, in the meanwhile, instruct them in matters of the Faith. And I shall introduce them so that, after my death, they may accept them instead of me. With the result that each may gain from the other according to the service of God to whom I recommend thee.[52]

It is evident that while the bishop was firm in his belief that there was nothing wrong with the Chaldean baptismal formula, he was proposing to the king that nothing should be changed precipitately and that the Roman clergy should so ingratiate themselves with the Christians of St. Thomas, that the latter may gradually shed their suspicion about them, and eventually permit them to step into his place as their pastors.

True to his word, Mar Jacob set himself arduously to the task of preparing his people for the changeover to Rome. We find him in 1530 taking the Father Commissary of the Franciscans with him for this purpose and reaping a rich harvest. For, writing to king D. João III, about his success he says :

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 355-56.

I, Jacome Abuna, kiss the hands of Your Highness. Here they gave me a letter from you, which gave me much consolation, as I saw from it, that you think of me and also of these Christians of the country. You recommend them to me, that I should work for them. God knows my will that it is good for it, and as regards the work, I am working in it as much as I can, as your Highness may learn from *Alfonso Mexias*, who has helped me well, as he is a friend of the service of God and that of Your Highness. Also the *Fathers of Saint Francis* help me well. For the Father Commissary went with me there 2 or 3 times and brought forth much fruit, for we baptized 266 souls and, besides, people were married at the door of the church and we brought much pepper. And this journey to that place is very arduous, for we go through enemies' land, in whose power and land they dwell, and they (the enemies) favour some, who are hard of heart, and others, that have goodwill to go over to the usage of the Church of Rome, but have not the courage to do it for fear of them as one of the friars who go there (to Portugal) can tell you, who was there with the Commissary. He can also tell you the goodwill he found amongst the people, so that with the help of God and that of Your Highness we shall make progress.[53]

As the reconciliation of the Christians of St. Thomas was proceeding apace, the Franciscans addressed themselves to the next great task—of raising Catholic priests from among these Christians themselves. For this purpose Friar Vincent de Lagos established a College at Cranganore in 1541 for the education of the sons of these Christians, and very soon a hundred boys from the best families were gathered in this College.[54] Mar Jacob helped the friars in their mission, a task in which he had assisted ten years earlier by bringing to Cochin seven boys for being trained in Catholic theology.[55]

[53] Schurhammer, "Three Letters of Mar Jacob, Bishop of Malabar, 1503-1550," *Gregorianum*, vol. XIV, pp. 78-79.

[54] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

[55] Schurhammer, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER IX

ORGANIZATION OF THE PADROADO

I

In the matter of ecclesiastical organization "Asia Portuguesa" depended on the episcopal See of Funchal in Madeira, which Pope Leo X brought into existence by his bull *Pro Excellenti* of 1514. Prior to the creation of this diocese all ordinary jurisdiction in regard to overseas territories had been vested *nullius dioceses* by virtue of the bull of Calixtus III—*Inter coetera*—of 1455—in the Vicar-General of the Order of Christ which had been financing the Portuguese maritime enterprise.[1] King D. Manuel, its eleventh administrator, had the convent of the Order transferred from Castro Marim to the city of Tomar. And when he prevailed on Pope Leo X to create the diocese of Funchal, he also requested the Pontiff to appoint the Vicar-General of Tomar bishop of the new See.[2]

There was always a Vicar-General to look after the affairs of the eastern mission, who in the early days resided at Cochin but moved on to Goa, when the latter became the Portuguese metropolis. There were in all five Vicars-General, but curiously enough the first Vicar-General we know of appears only in 1505 in the person of one Mestre Diogo. He seems to have come to India in the company of D. Francisco de Almeida, and the first time he is mentioned is on the occasion of the inauguration of the fortress of Quilon by the viceroy, as having preached at the Mass which highlighted the ceremony.[3] He was succeeded in 1510 by Fr. João Fernandes,[4] who had been the Vicar of Cochin, before he was appointed to this office. He left for Portugal after serving in the capacity of Vicar for three years and then returned to Cochin, having managed to be promoted to the Vicar-Generalship, while

[1] Bragança-Pereira, "História Religiosa de Goa", *OP*, 2 & 3, p. 52; *Corpo Diplomatico Portuguez*, vol. I, p. 257.

[2] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 294, note 16.

[3] Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 542; Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-88.

[4] *Documentacxo*, vol. I, p. 112.

he retained his old incumbency of Vicar of the place.[5] Happily for the Church, Friar Domingo de Souza who succeeded him in 1514 was cast in a different mould. He took to his duties seriously, going on his visitations each year to the fortresses and the Christian settlements. The close study which he made of the problems that beset these settlements enabled him to reorganize the missions with a view to their improvement.[6] He was succeeded by Fr. João Pacheco towards the end of 1520, during whose tenure of office India was visited by the Bishop of Dume. The relations between the two were not cordial and he seems to have left after a short term of office, being succeeded by Fr. Sebastião Pires, whose tenure of this office was the longest, nearly eleven years.

The most outstanding among the Vicars-General, however, was Fr. Miguel Vaz, who entered his office in 1532. He gave such an impetus to missionary activity that he not only effected a radical transformation of the social and religious life in Goa but changed the very face of the island. In his time the number of churches and chapels in the City and outside rose to fourteen, in which there were more than a hundred clergymen.[7] When St. Francis Xavier landed in Goa in May 1542, it had already assumed the aspect of a Christian settlement. Giving his first impression of the place to his colleagues in Rome, the Saint wrote in his letter of September 20, 1542 :

> It is a fine-looking city entirely in the hands of the Christians. It has a friary with many friars (of the Order) of St. Francis, and a greatly venerated cathedral with a large number of canons and several churches. We should truly thank God Our Lord, seeing that the Christian religion is flourishing with such numbers in these distant lands in the midst of the non-Christians.[8]

This is indeed a splendid tribute to the labourers, who had so long borne the burden and heat of day, on the part of a new recruit who was soon to prove to be another St. Paul by his high sense of mission, the length and strenuousness of the journeys which he undertook, and the profundity of insight into human affairs, revealed in his epistles.

[5] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 288. [6] *Documentacao*, vol. I, pp. 244-53.
[7] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 669.
[8] Schurhammer and Wicki, *Epistolae S. Francisci Xavierii*, t. I, pp. 121-22.

He was attracted in particular by the *Santa Casa de Misericordia*. He wrote to St. Ignatius:

> We have in this city as well as in most other places where Christians have settled a confraternity of the most honoured men who undertake the relief of the poor among the inhabitants, whether old Christians or converts. It is called the Confraternity of Mercy and is composed of the Portuguese. It is incredible the way these good men serve God Our Lord, by supplying the needs of the poor.[9]

The missioners had always been baffled by the babel of tongues by which they had been confronted in the East, and had before the arrival of Xavier successfully tried an ingenious means of reaching the non-Christian people. In Goa, Friar Diogo de Borba, using his Indian students to convey his meaning while conversing with the local people on religious matters had found them more successful than the professional interpreters, the *topazes*. And so it had occurred to him that, if students speaking different languages could be trained in an institution, they could later on be used to advantage in missionary work in the capacity of priests and catechists. He broached the idea to his influential friends Miguel Vaz, the Vicar-General, Fernão Rodrigues de Castello-Branco, the controller of the finances, and Pero Fernandes and Cosmo Anes, high officials, who all took up the idea most enthusiastically, and soon raised a building by private subscription.[10] In the delightful phraseology of Gaspar Correa:

> Master Diogo was industry itself and secured pagan and Muslim youths of all nations that he could get. He made them Christians and added to their number others who were already so. These lads were all of twelve years or less, who knew not women. He gathered them, some willingly and others by force, in this building with a dormitory and a refectory, where they were well-groomed and well-fed, and lived a well-regulated life. They were first taught to read and write, and were then given a course in Latin and other subjects.[11]

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[10] Wicki, *Documenta Indica* 1540-1549, vol. I, 53, 7. Paulus to Simon Rodrigues.

[11] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 289.

The persons with whom the idea of this institution originated banded themselves into a committee called the Confraternity of the Holy Faith.

Casting about for permanent means to run this institution, Fr. Vaz and his friends found in the temples in the island which had been broken down a ready source of income which they would apply to the chapels and churches and the Confraternity of the Holy Faith. And taking advantage of the absence of D. Estevão da Gama, the governor, Castello-Branco, who became the interim governor, made the *gauncars*[12] cede two thousand silver *tangas* a year from the income of the temples to the churches and to the Confraternity. For this purpose he called a meeting in his office on June 28, 1541, which was attended by all the principal *gauncars* of the villages, and requested them according to the preamble to the resolutions that they should of their own free will

> Be pleased to donate the income of the lands of the temples (pagodas)—which existed in these islands but had been broken down without any possibility of new ones taking their place—to the chapels which had been built and also to the Confraternity of Conversion to the Holy Faith. These institutions had heretofore no provision made (for their maintenance), all this income being spent on the temples—their gurus, dancing-girls, Brahmans, and jesters, and their servants such as ironsmiths, carpenters, barbers, shoemakers, painters and others. . . . Many of these *gauncars* (who) had accepted our holy faith, their minds being illumined, had been approached with regard to this matter, and had agreed to confer with the rest and transmit their decision in their own name and that of the people of the island. The reason was that the revenues of these lands did not belong in any manner to the king. Nor were the *gauncars* and the workers of these villages in any way bound to pay for these lands situated within the territory of each village anything except the land tax which had been determined by the Charter. After paying the land revenue set down in the Charter they took of their own free will (*khushi-vrat*) part of it and the income thereof they gave to the temples and their servants for their devotions. And now that the temples were all demolished, the lands reverted to them to be rented as they wished, and from the income that

[12] By *gauncar* is meant governor, administrator, or benefactor

would accrue from such renting, they were now pleased with the reasons the Controller of the Finances gave them, of their own free will to pay the income of these lands each year for all time to the king to be applied for the purposes as had been explained by the Controller of the Finances.[13]

Two years later, however, the same *gauncars* complained to the new governor, Martim Afonso de Souza, that they had actually been compelled to agree to the transfer of this income from the temples to the churches and the Confraternity, declaring in their petition that :

> Dr. Fernão Rodrigues de Castello-Branco, the Controller of the Finances, summoning them, they were called upon to pay an impost called *coxivarado* (khushi-vrat) meaning a voluntary contribution (peita de prazer). And this very Controller of the Finances, using the powers of the Governor, in the absence of D. Estevão da Gama, who then held this office, being away in the Straits, he made several of them sign an agreement on this issue, with threats and insults.[14]

It was due to the exertions of Fr. Miguel Vaz that Portuguese India became a confessional state, the king unwisely enforcing the principle *cujus regio ejus religio*. As the *tombo geral* of Francis Paes of 1595 has it :

> When the King (D. João III) was informed that while many of these inhabitants were already Christians, others were firm in their gentile beliefs, but that they had (both) agreed that the performance of these rites and ceremonies in the temples where they worshipped be continued, he ordered that these temples be demolished and that not one be left in the whole of the island of Goa and its limits ; nor should the *gentoos* be allowed to perform any gentile ceremony in the land under his dominion—so that by this merciful rigour they would be made to forget the gentile cult and be converted to our holy Faith, as had happened and was happening to many who had already been converted. And in fulfilment of this holy work these temples were broken and demolished in the year 40 (1540).[15]

[13] Cunha Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez Oriental*, Fasciculo 5, pt. I, pp. 161-65.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 174.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

Fr. Miguel Vaz took upon himself the task of enforcing this policy of "merciful rigour." Writing to the king on January 6, 1543, he recommended one Fabião Gonsalves for his services, in going about with him on his temple-breaking excursions, and "pulling down with his own hands all the temples and houses of idolatry that had stood in Goa."[16] One may be sure that if Fr. Miguel Vaz had been the incumbent of his office in the times of Afonso de Albuquerque, *O Terrivel* would have given short shrift to the Vicar-General for his vandalism. True, the Florentine André Corsali reported from Cochin in a letter dated January 6, 1515, to the Duke Giuliano de Medici:

> In this land of Goa and indeed in the whole of India there are an infinite number of old buildings of the gentiles and in an islet in its vicinity called Divari, the Portuguese have, for their constructions in Goa, destroyed an ancient temple called *pagoda*. This was built with marvellous skill and with antique figures of surpassing perfection out of a certain black stone of which nothing remains, being ruined and wasted by these Portuguese who have not the least esteem for such things.[17]

While endorsing the condemnation of André Corsali for the indifference of the Portuguese towards works of art, it must, however, be admitted that the temple must have long fallen into desuetude, for the Portuguese thus to help themselves with its masonry for their own constructions, and no offence was meant to the Hindus when parts of the abandoned structure were used in the new buildings.

In striking contrast to their intolerance in Goa, the Portuguese showed much scrupulous respect for the religion of the local people in Cananore, Calicut, and Cochin, though happy at their conversion in increasing numbers. On the occasion of the feast, *Ova Purava*, which was celebrated in the month of August, presents in some form or other were invariably made to the Hindu employees of the Portuguese factories at these places.[18] They also refrained from eating beef and thereby avoided wounding the susceptibilities of the Hindus. In 1502, when Vasco da Gama's fleet was lying at

[16] *Documentacão*, vol. II, pp. 343.
[17] Ramusio, *Primo Volume delle Navigatione et Viaggi*, p. 196.
[18] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 33, 34, 100.

anchor before Cochin, three Muslims from the city came on board selling beef. The king of Cochin, getting scent of this, requested the admiral to send the parties guilty of the sacrilege bound in chains. Vasco da Gama immediately prohibited the purchase of beef and when, on the following day, the selfsame Muslims came again, hoping to do profitable business, they were seized and sent to the king who had them impaled alive.[19]

The need for episcopal visitation of the overseas territories had not escaped the attention of the Portuguese crown, and D. Manuel writing to Pope Alexander VI as early as the return of Vasco da Gama from his first voyage, had impressed on the Pontiff the urgency of appointing an Apostolic Commissary to provide for the religious needs of the territory, especially to administer Confirmation and Holy Orders. The Pope by his brief *Cum sicut majestas* of March 26, 1500, complied with the request and directed that the king should submit the name of his candidate together with his qualifications, so that the matter of the appointment could be taken in hand. The king, however, was permitted to appoint a person of his choice without submitting his name to the Holy See for a year, after which period he was required to follow the procedure laid down in the brief. The Pope vested in the person so nominated the powers and faculties of the Ordinary of a diocese.[20]

D. Duarte Nunes, titular Bishop of Laudicia, was the first prelate to visit India under these arrangements; but authorities differ as to the date of his visit.[21] His journey through the fortresses and missions was pacific and uneventful. But his successor, Friar André de Torquemada, who must have arrived in India about 1520, seems to have greatly fluttered the dovecots, as the bishop gave himself an ambitious programme of "putting all men on a true way of salvation."[22] He was given a cold reception on account of the strained relations between him and João Pacheco, the Vicar-General. They had first met in the island of Terceira,[23] where the bishop had punished him for certain offences which he had committed in the confessional.[24] At the request of the Fran-

[19] *Noticias Ultramarinas*, no. 5, cited in Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 113
[20] Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, p. 53.
[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
[22] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 443.
[23] An island belonging to the Azores.
[24] *Documentacão*, vol. I, p. 445.

ciscans the bishop ordained four of these friars. The fathers were too few for the heavy parochial and missionary work they had to discharge and could not afford the depletion of their personnel, caused by the long voyage to Portugal for the sole purpose of receiving ordination. Moreover, the Franciscans had been permitted by the Holy See to request any bishop who was available on the spot to ordain their candidates, dispensing them from further formalities. Along with these friars the bishop ordained another cleric, who had already received minor Orders, and who had with him the permission of his prelate.[25] The Vicar-General was waiting for an opportunity to avenge himself. He declared that the bishop had no authority to confer Holy Orders, as that had not been included in the terms of his appointment. He caused an inquiry to be held and declared the bishop suspended from his ministry.[26] Happily, the quarrel ended through the good offices of Father Sebastião Pires, the Vicar of Cochin, who brought about a reconciliation between the two prelates.[27]

In the matter of ordinations Bishop Vaqueiro, the last of these bishops, went a stage further than the Bishop of Dume, and admitted to the priesthood a number of Indians. He felt that as they knew the language and customs of the people they would be more successful than the European clergy, working through interpreters (*topazes*), in the work of evangelization.[28]

In this the bishop was truly ahead of his times. For only a year previous to his visits, orders had been received from the Franciscan Provincial forbidding the local Franciscans to receive novices from among the sons of the Portuguese born of Indian mothers. Friar Rodrigo de Serpa, the Franciscan Commissary in India, rightly regarded this prohibition as scandalous. "There are many honourable men here," he wrote to the king protesting against the order, "whose sons wish to serve God, and are not different from the Portuguese. Taking the habit in India, they will love the monasteries here all the more. Further, they will remain in the country and save the expenses of the voyages to and fro, and will be able to convert to the Faith an increasing number of their maternal relatives."[29] But already as far back as 1514 the great Albuquerque

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 453-54.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 439-40.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 440.
[28] Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, no. 4, p. 18
[29] *Documentacão*, vol. II. p. 214.

had, with his usual foresight, sent an Indian, Antonio da Costa, to Portugual to be trained as a preacher.[30] And since in the Catholic Church there are no preachers apart from priests, it may be concluded that, in case he persevered in his vocation, da Costa was eventually admitted to the priesthood in Portugal. The official attitude of the Holy See in this regard was defined four years later, when by his brief, *Exponi vobis* (July 12, 1518), Pope Leo X permitted the Abyssinians and Indians to be admitted to Holy Orders.[31]

D. Vaqueiro had been preceded by Bishop D. Martinho, who was in India some time in 1523. He was involved in a plot, though quite unwittingly, to depose Francis Pereira, the Captain of Goa, who had made himself unpopular among the gentry of the place on account of his arbitrary acts. The presence of the bishop was used by the conspirators to further their plans, and they approached him with the proposal that he should agree to be the head of the government until the arrival of the viceroy, Vasco da Gama. He, however, refused to be a party though he agreed not to reveal the names of the persons. But the plot having leaked out, Francisco Pereira insulted the bishop.[32]

Christianity had now made sufficient progress in the East. Accordingly, by his dispatch of May 20, 1532, D. João III ordered his ambassador at the Roman Curia, D. Martinho de Portugal, to represent to the Holy See the need of raising the diocese of Funchal to metropolitan dignity and of creating dioceses at Cape Verde, S. Tomé and Goa. It was proposed that the diocese of Goa should commence at the Cape of Good Hope, which was fixed as the furthest limit of the diocese of S. Tomé, and comprise the whole of the eastern world, including India and China and all the islands and lands already discovered as well as those yet to be discovered, where the Portuguese would build fortresses and live with other Christians.[33] Pope Clement VII deferred the consideration of the proposal to January 3, 1533. But Pope Paul III complied with the request of the monarch, and by his bull *Aequum reputanmus* established the diocese of Goa on November 3, 1534. He raised the old church of St. Catherine, which Albuquerque had

[30] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 203.

[31] Jordão, *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae Regnum I*, p. 121.

[32] Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 818.

[33] Couto, *op. cit.*, *D. V*, liv. 3, CH. 8, p. 275; Bragança-Pereira, *art. cit.*, nos. 2 & 3, p. 57.

built, to the dignity of a cathedral and appointed the following dignitaries: archdeacon, treasurer, teacher, and twelve canons.[34]

The king selected for the office of bishop a priest named D. Francisco de Mello, and had him consecrated in Lisbon with great pomp and ceremony. Unhappily the bishop died before embarking for India. As his successor, the king then proposed to the Holy See Friar João d'Albuquerque, a Franciscan of Castillian origin.[35] The Pope at first objected to the appointment and actually instructed Cardinal Santiquatro to write to the king that he should not present friars for such appointments, which should preferably go to secular priests. And it was only when Pedro de Souza de Tavora, the Portuguese plenipotentiary, assured the Pope that after a diligent inquiry they had failed to find a secular priest with the requisite qualities willing to go to the East,[36] that he relented, and appointed d'Albuquerque as Bishop of Goa on April 11, 1537. At the same time he nominated Friar Vicente as coadjutor with the right of succession.[37]

D'Albuquerque arrived in Goa on March 25, 1538 by the same fleet which also brought the viceroy, D. Garcia de Noronha. But the long voyage had so told on his constitution that it was not until a year later that he could inaugurate the cathedral and institute the chapter.

The clergy that served in India all this while, specially the monks, were for the most part hard-working and well-behaved. "The churches are well-served," said Father Sebastião Pires in his report

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58. The diocese was assigned an income of 500 cruzados annually from the revenue which accrued to the king in the island of Goa as the perpetual administrator of the Order of Christ. The archdeacon now drew the income which was formerly enjoyed by the Rector of St. Catherine —which amounted to 100 gold ducats. The other dignitaries received forty ducats of gold each, and the canons thirty each. The king undertook (*a*) to remodel the church of St. Catherine and to maintain, preserve and repair not only this church but also the chapels, oratories, monasteries and holy places in the city; and (*b*) to supply to the bishop of Goa the dignitaries and canons, and tó the churches and monasteries, ministers and beneficiaries, beside furnishing vestments and other church furniture. To meet the expenses in this behalf the bull of July 8, 1539, granted to the king, as the Grand Master of the Order of Christ, the receipt of the tithes. Bragança-Pereira, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88.

[35] Couto, *art. cit.*, D. V., liv. 3, cap. 8, p. 229.

[36] *Documentacão*, vol. II, p. 248.

[37] Couto, *loc. cit.*

to the king dated December 16, 1527, "in matters spiritual by those who hold the benefices, celebrating masses and administering sacraments. It is chiefly so at Cochin where I was a priest, and it seems to me that there will be few in the realm which are better served."[38] When Pires was transferred from Cochin in 1519, a representation was made to the king to have him back. The signatories said that he took great pains to teach them and their families the articles of the Faith, and laboured hard to bring the non-Christians into the Christian fold.[39] Fr. Avito Fernandes, the Vicar of Cananore, was another priest who was singled out for special praise. He held a service every afternoon which was attended by women and children and men on the retired list. He kept the canonical hours in choir, besides working for the conversion of the non-Christians, and of course visiting the sick in the hospital.[40] This was the normal life of the clergymen. They had to be on their best behaviour owing to public opinion which at times tended to be very critical.

But the ecclesiastical organization of the times left some loopholes through which ungodly men wormed their way into the benefices of the Church. "It will be a great mercy," wrote Friar Dominique Fernandes, the second Vicar-General, in his letter to the king, dated December 22, 1514, "if the clerics whom Your Highness sends are learned and well-behaved. Your Highness should always send them to the Vicar of Tomar, and they should come with his orders. The one who is going to Malacca has no orders with him of the Vicar, nor has he brought it from You, nor from his prelates. . . . Your Highness should warn those who wish to come here that they should not fail to provide themselves with the orders of the Vicar for the security of his own conscience and of mine."[41]

Writing to the Portuguese sovereign in 1510, Gonçalo Fernandes, a high official, described the life of this type of cleric :

> I do not know where else can be found such a vile clergy and friars as come here. I say this on account of the wicked deeds which they commit, their ignorance of their duties, their knavery

[38] *Documentacao*, vol. II, p. 142.
[39] *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 375-76.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 372.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 247-48.

> in the confessional, and the contaminated, beastly, filthy and dissolute life of many of them . . . which is a scandal alike to the faithful, catechumens and non-Christians.[42]

"As to the clergy and friars, who reside outside the monasteries," wrote the Bishop of Dume on his visitation of India, "they are for the most part very corrupt, and their bad example is the cause of the loss of devotion among the native Christians."[43] Such clergymen were mostly young men, incapable of controlling themselves,[44] and who had come to India through official godfathers.[45]

Nor were some of the Vicars-General themselves above reproach. It was said of Fr. John Fernandes, the second Vicar-General, that he was more of a trader than a priest, and that his first act after landing was to purchase cloth worth 150 cruzados for selling it for profit. He came with a son of his whom he appointed supervisor (*merinho*) of the clergy.[46] According to the Bishop of Dume, Julião Pacheco, the third Vicar-General, had "poisoned the entire Christianity by his vile life and example."[47] Towards the end Fr. Sebastião Pires too seems to have become a little reckless. A number of misappropriations on his part were revealed in the course of a judicial inquiry, and he was probably recalled to Portugal to account for his misdeeds.[48] However, the historian should make due allowance for the Portuguese national vice of *maldizer*, of which Prof. Edgar Prestage has a timely warning in his little classic on Albuquerque, in forming an estimate of men whose molehill of a defect may have been turned into a mountain by popular gossip. Moreover, the ministers of a religion which claimed to be unique could not allow themselves the luxury of easy morals, living cheek by jowl with the yogis, fasting and making penance for their own sins and those of their neighbours, and the Brahman *moyen* and others setting an example to the best Christian in the

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[43] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 19. Letter dated December 28, 1523.

[44] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 343. Fr. Sebastião Pereira to the king, dated January 8, 1518.

[45] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 192. Friar Vincente de Leguna to the king, dated November 29, 1532.

[46] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 113. Fr. Julião Nunes, ex-Vicar of Cananore to the king, dated October 14, 1510.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 445.

[48] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 110-12. The proceedings are without date.

matter of his family life and morals. Finally, the clerics had to reckon with ecclesiastical discipline, specially the superiors of the Friars who ruled their subjects with an iron hand.

The religious and theological training of the clergy partook of the nature of the training imparted to the clergy at home, although the formation of the diocesan clergy in Portugal, except in the case of those who had their training at the universities, compared unfavourably with that of the regulars.[49] An idea of the intellectual fare on which the clergy was nourished may be obtained from a list of books presented to the library of the Franciscan Friary at Cochin. Among these books we find mention of the Bible, which, if it was an edition published prior to 1500, may have been one or other of those issued from Basle, and exemplars of which are found among the incunabula preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional of Lisbon: Johann Amarbach, 1482; Johann Froeben, 1495, and Johann Petri and Johann Froeben, 1498; the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, a work in thirty volumes which he entitled a summary, and his *Summa Contra Gentiles*; a popular moral treatise of the times, the *Summa Angelica* of Blessed Angelo of Clavissio; a representative of the class of patristic literature—*Vitae Petrum* of St. Jerome; Canon Law with commentaries, such as that of the celebrated professor of Canon Law at the University of Bologna (12th Century)—The *Corpus Juris Canonici*; mystical works and especially the *Vita Christi* in Latin, of the medieval writer Ludolf of Sazony, as also its Portuguese translation in four volumes first published in 1495 by Friars Bernardo of Alcobaça and Nicolau Vieira: sermons, psalters, liturgical works, and the ubiquitous *Flos Sanctorum*, the Portuguese counterpart in those days of our Butler's *Lives of the Saints*.[50]

The Franciscans were the first to send members of their Order as missioners to India. The first batch of missioners landed at Calicut in 1500, consisting of Friars Gaspar, Francisco da Cruz, Simão de Guimares, Luis Salvador, Masseu, Pedro Neto, and João da Vitoria, under the leadership of Henrique de Coimbra. These were heroic times and the missioners were often required to lead the armies in battle with the crucifix held high in their hands.[51]

[49] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 511, citing Fortunato de Almeida, *Historia da Igreja em Portugal*, vol. II, pp. 312-329.

[50] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 336-39; Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-59.

[51] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-57.

The credit, however, of being the founder of the friary goes to Fr. Antonio do Louro (or Loueiro), first appointed to Socotra where the Portuguese built a fort to command the entrance to the Straits. He was shipwrecked when in 1510 he was on his way to Goa, having been transferred to the city that had just fallen into the hands of the Portuguese. Managing to reach the shore somehow, they were immediately put under arrest and were taken to sultan Muzaffar, who held them to ransom. Do Louro, leaving his hood and cord with the sultan as security and promising at the same time not to wear another set until his return, made his way to Goa to fetch the ransom money. He was well-received in Goa and returned with the money to Gujarat only to find that Muzaffar was dead. His son, Mahmud, honoured his father's word and Do Louro returned with the companions on his voyage to Goa.[52]

He desired to have a permanent habitation for his Order and so he left for Portugal to obtain the approval of the king, and of his superiors. He was permitted to build three friaries in India—at Goa, at Cochin, and at whichever other place he may choose for the purpose (Chaul or Cananore). On his return to India he was accompanied by eight confrères. Among his first acts was the erection of the friary at Goa at the cost of the exchequer. It was named after St. Francis of Assissi. The turn of Cochin came next and the friary was named after St. Anthony.

The Franciscans did a considerable amount of work in Goa, where they were found in sufficient numbers. In 1517-18, for instance, they made no fewer than 800 conversions. It was their desire to have a separate settlement for their converts. When they approached Lopo Soares with the proposal, he advised them to come to an agreement with the parochial clergy. The latter, however, proved unsympathetic, and the matter was dropped.

Fr. do Louro was also the first to make the suggestion to the government that converts to Christianity be preferred in appointments in government service. But the Franciscans interfered in matters that were clearly out of their province, and made themselves unpopular. They supported the candidature of Lopo Vaz de Sampaio as against that of Pero de Mascarenhas. When the governor D. Henrique de Menezes died in Cananore and the letters of succession were opened, it was found that Pero de Mascarenhas had been designated as successor. Pero, however, was then serving

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 247-48.

at Malacca. Pending his arrival, the *fidalgos* decided that the next letter of succession and the candidate mentioned in it should hold the fort until Pero arrived. It however happened that the ships coming in from Portugal in 1526, brought a new edict which changed the procedure about the filling of vacancies arising from the death of a governor. The old letters of succession were to be no longer valid. The authorities in Goa were to await further instructions. The result was that Pero, who had arrived in the meanwhile, was not allowed to take charge, and Lopo Vaz de Sampaio continued as governor.

There was an important section of *fidalgos* who thought that the new edict could not be applied to the present situation. The *fidalgos* were torn into two factions. As the party supporting Lopo's cause was headed by Afonso Mexia—a friend of the Franciscans—these latter allowed themselves to be drawn into the struggle. It was then decided that the case be submitted for arbitration—an equal number of judges to be proposed by the two candidates besides those chosen by the *fidalgos*. The vote being divided, a new judge had to be called in to resolve the tie, and the decision was given in favour of Lopo Vaz. Besides themselves with joy, the Franciscans conveyed the decision of the court—in session at their friary—by means of signs from their belfry to the fort, where Mexia was residing. They were also not much liked by the governor, Martim Afonso de Souza. It was not devotion or zeal, he felt, which had prompted them to do what they did. It was rather ill-will against the secular clergy, whom they wanted to mulct of their means of livelihood—the mass-stipends. On one occasion they went so far as to obstruct the addition of a belfry to the cathedral at Goa; and when it was constructed, despite their opposition, they threatened to abandon their friary. Afonso was only too glad at this; this was his opportunity to replace the Franciscans with the Dominicans.[53]

The Dominicans, so far did not have a permanent establishment in India, these individual friars of the Order had accompanied the Portuguese fleets. There were three Dominicans with Albuquerque, one of whom, Fr. Domingos de Sousa, later became the Vicar-General.[54] In 1519-1521 there is a mention of Fr. Luis de Vitoria and Fr. João Caro in the documents of the time. This latter

[53] *Documentacão*, vol. II, pp. 309-10.

[54] Silva-Rego, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

friar had been one of the judges chosen by Lopo Vaz. It would, however, appear from later correspondence that the prime object of his visit to India was to spy for Spain.[55] Another notable Dominican was Friar Vincent de Laguna, a man of apostolic zeal, highly appreciated for his pulpit oratory.[56]

Understandably, the clergy though intimately connected with the education of the children, did not actively participate in it. It was, therefore, the Portuguese authorities who started schools for the education of the children in the Christian settlements at Goa, Cochin, and possibly also at Cananore, about the year 1512. Having married and settled in these places during the previous decade, the Portuguese must have had a sufficiently large school-going population, not to speak of the children of the Indian converts. These latter were not only educated free-of-charge, but also provided with free board. "The Capitão Mor orders João Froles, the customs officer in the fortress of Cochin," reads one of the official communiques of Albuquerque, "that he should supply to each of the sixteen boys of the indigenous converts, who are now commanded to be taught to read, a *fardo* of rice for their maintenance every eight days, and that this rice be given to Afonso Alvarez, their teacher."[57] In 1519 Ayres da Gama requested the king for an increase in the quota of black rice which was supplied to the school at Cananore, since if they are well-fed "the children would learn better and would be of great service in the cause of our Holy Faith."[58]

An order of D. Duarte de Menezes, the governor, of November 2, 1521, gives an idea of the reading material on which these children were brought up. He commands the *vedor da Fazenda* that he should instruct the Factor to supply fifty *cartilhas*,[59] five *Flos Sanctorum*, and four Gospels for the use of the children reading in the school at Goa.[60]

It was at about this time that Ignatius Loyola was trying to form a new religious Order—the Society of Jesus. He had placed himself with his companions, unreservedly at the service of the

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 274-76.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 159, June 20, 1512. This was increased by half a *fardo* a month later. *Ibid.*, p. 160. A *fardo* is a bagful.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 373.

[59] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 419-21. A *cartilha* is a primer.

[60] *Ibid.*

Church, and the results of their selfless ministry were being felt almost every day. When João III heard of the new Society, he sent an urgent order to Pedro Mascarenhas, his representative at Rome, to request Loyola to send post-haste six of his priests to go out to India with the new governor, Martim Afonso de Souza, to spread the light of the Faith. Ignatius explained to Mascarenhas that he and his companions were bound to the Pope and took their orders from him. Mascarenhas then approached the Pontiff and obtained permission for Loyola to send as many of his companions as he could spare. Ignatius selected Masters Simon Rodrigues and Francis Xavier, Fr. Messer Paulo and Friar Francis de Monsilhas, and they left for Portugal in the company of Pedro Mascarenhas.

The king was much impressed by the life and example of the Jesuits. He retained Simon Rodrigues—who was a Portuguese—at Lisbon, and who eventually established the University of Coimbra. The rest, with Francis Xavier at their head, embarked for India in the company of the governor, Martim Afonso de Souza. The fleet by which they left set sail from Lisbon in July 1541, and arrived in Goa on May 6, 1542.

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL MEDICINE

Inspired by the noble example of its divine founder, the Church from earliest times had devoted special attention to the care of the sick which it considered a moral and religious obligation, although the modern critical historian cannot admit that it was Christianity that first established social medicine in the world. The discovery of three Roman military hospitals at Vienna, Bonn and Baden (in Switzerland), clearly shows that sanitary service was well organized in the provinces of the Roman Empire.[1] Nor were hospitals and dispensaries providing medicine to the poor unknown in other parts of the ancient world. Such institutions are often mentioned in Buddhist legends. These legends describe pious gifts and liberal donations to such institutions as examples of the virtue of alms-giving and generosity. Aśoka, the famous Maurya emperor (274-236 B.C.), is known to have organized social medicine in his empire on lines that were set forth in Buddhist thought and ethics. In his second edict, this philosopher-king declares that throughout his domains and in the adjoining countries far beyond the borders, Ceylon to the south, and Persia and Syria to the northwest, under the Seleucid king Antiyaka (Antiochus) medical treatment was provided for man and beast, and healing herbs were imported and planted in districts where they did not exist before. These institutions of social medicine continued to flourish in India and Ceylon long after the break-up of the Maurya empire. In the fourth century A.D., there is mention of physicians appointed by the king, one for every ten villages in Ceylon, and of other doctors charged with the care of the army, its elephants and its horses.[2] In the twelfth century, Parantaka the Great of Ceylon maintained a large hospital which provided for hundreds of patients, with a male and a female attendant attached to each. In South India, there existed subsidized hospitals in many towns

[1] Castagliani, *Histoire de la Medicine*, pp. 204-05.

[2] Cumston, *An Introduction to the History of Medicine*, ch. III, cited by Zimmer, *Hindu Medicine*, pp. 86-87.

and villages, and there were hospitals attached to a number of temples, monasteries, and educational institutes.[3]

But it was left for Christianity to make its best contribution to the progress of medical science by turning its noblest minds to the relief of human suffering. "If there be any one sick among you let him send for the ancients of the community," wrote St. James in his Epistle.[4] The care of the sick became the first charge of the Bishop in the primitive Church. The fathers devoted themselves with loving zeal to the tending of the sick, and medicine remained for a long time the chief occupation of the ecclesiastics. When persecution ceased and the Christians came into the open, hospitals began to be founded under the patronage of the Church. One of the earliest of these institutions was the hospital of Caesarea, founded by St. Basil in A.D. 370. Fabiola founded the first of the great hospitals in Rome in A.D. 400, and about the same epoch, empress Eudixie opened her hospitals in Jerusalem. Special apartments soon came to be added to these hospitals for lepers, and hospices were provided for travellers and pilgrims.[5] It was, however, in Europe that Christian medical service reached its high-water mark at the close of the Middle Ages in the fifteenth century. In the Italian cities, in particular, the hospitals were real architectural monuments, containing objects of art, calculated to divert the minds of the patients from their present afflictions. The hospital of Sienna, for instance, was enriched with the precious frescoes of Domenico de Bartoli, and the hospital of Ceppo of Pistoia was ornamented with the bas-reliefs of Lucca della Rabbia which furnish unique iconographic contribution to the history of medicine.[6]

Christian Europe had in the meanwhile mastered all the available medical knowledge—Graeco-Roman, Arab, and Hindu, the last of which had trickled into Europe through Arabic channels. Under the patronage of Khalif Almansur in the seventh century A.D., the encyclopedic works of Charaka and Śuśruta had been translated into Arabic, together with some sixteen other works on

[3] Reddy, "Medical Relief in Medieval South India, Centres of Medical Aid and Types of Medical Institutions," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. IX, pp. 385-400, cited by Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[4] Ch. V, 19.

[5] Castagliani, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-23.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 319-20.

Hindu medicine. Europe took its first lessons in the medical culture of India through the Latin translations of the Arabic treatises of Avicenna, Rhazes, and Serapion.[7] Apart from this indirect introduction to classical Hindu medicine, a first-hand knowledge was demanded in the European universities of the works of the great masters—the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates, the *Ars Pavia* of Galen, the *Canon* of Avicenna, the *Colligot* of Averroes, the *Isagoges* of Johannitus, and the *Ninth Book* of Rhazes.[8] But in the fifteenth century, the unquestioning faith with which these works had been studied so far was replaced by a discerning criticism, resulting in valuable additions to medical knowledge. Not only were critical editions of these work produced in an endeavour to arrive at the correct texts, but the texts themselves were frequently submitted to a searching test. Nicholas Leoniceno, for example, produced a whole book of errors, which he had detected in the works of Pliny, and was bold enough to declare, after confronting the Arabic translations with the Greek originals, that Serapion and Avicenna had not read the Greeks.[9]

Released from the shackles of religious taboos by the bull of Sixtus IV (1471-84), anatomy registered fresh advances in its development. These taboos had retarded the progress of the science both among the Hindus and the Arabs, and were threatening to do the same thing among the Christians. The official authorization of the study of anatomy on corpses by the Church encouraged scholars to pursue the study of the subject with zest. Giamatteo Ferrari, a distinguished alumnus of Milan, who taught at the University of Padua, accurately described the anatomy of the different human organs in his commentary on the *Ninth Book* of Rhazes, and he was the first to designate as ovaries what had hitherto been known as feminine testicles. Alexander Achillini, who was perhaps the best anatomist of his times, demonstrated the errors of Galen. He studied the anatomy of the bladder, of the caecum, and the hepatic duct, described the ligament suspending the liver, and was the first to understand the functions of the first pair of cranial nerves.[10] The discovery of lenses during this period,[11] by placing the instruments of macrocosmic research

[7] Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[8] Castagliani, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 303-04.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 301.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 318.

into the hands of the anatomist, powerfully aided research in a manner not possible before, and led to the breathtaking discoveries of the subsequent epochs.

Progress was also achieved in other branches of medical science, notably in pharmacology and surgery. In his *Compendium Aromatarium*, Saladino of Ascoli improved on the famous earlier work of Nicholas of Salerno, the *Antidotarium*, by defining the precise weight and dosage of each medicament, the manner in which the plants, flowers, and roots were to be mixed in the composition of the various remedies, the best way to preserve the simples which contained these compositions, and the exact method to be followed in organizing a pharmacy; while in his *Lumen Apothecarium*, a contemporary work first published in 1492, Ciriaco de Tortona assembled all the pharmacological knowledge of the period.[12] In surgery, Leonardo Bertaglia, a professor at the University of Padua and a surgeon of merit, published the results of his researches in his *Commentary on the Fourth Book of Avicenna*. In Central Europe, the study of surgery was taken up in right earnest. Among the most important books produced there at this epoch, was the work on surgery of Jerome Brunschwig, published at Strasbourg in 1497. The volume is of extraordinary interest not only because of the original manner in which a chapter is explained, but also on account of the gravures which gave a correct idea of the state of the surgical art in the fifteenth century, enabling one to know what instruments were used by the surgeons, how they set about their work in the pharmacy and at the bedside of the patients, and how they conducted delivery cases, dressed wounds, and joined fractures.[13] In ophthalmology, Europe generally followed the Arabic masters of the art, who practised operations on cataract with conspicuous success.[14]

A new branch of medical literature which came into vogue during this period were the popular works on herbs calculated to instruct the layman in the knowledge of the curative effects of plants. This literature had its origin in the compilations made in the cloister for the use of the monks, in order to teach them how to discern the medical plants. The literature was now reinforced by the influence of humanism which gave a new impetus

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 302.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 301-02.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 318.

to the study of botany. Among the most important of these works was that of Pseudo-Apulius and the famous *Hortus Sanitas* of John of Cuba.[15] Garcia da Orta, rightly styled "the father of Indian Botany," who went out to India in 1534, evidently took his clue from these works when he wrote his celebrated *Coloquios dos Simples e Drogas*[16] on the botany and the *Materia Medica* of the Orient.

When the Portuguese arrived in India, Hindu medicine had progressed little beyond the stage at which it had been left by the famous medical triad of ancient India, Charaka, Śuśruta, and Vāghbhata, who lived respectively in the first, fifth and eighth centuries. Garcia da Orta, who, far from despising native practitioners, sought their company, found them completely ignorant of anatomy ; to quote da Orta, "they had no knowledge of where the liver is nor the spleen, nor anything else."[17] The very atmosphere of India was inhospitable to the study of this science. The subtropical climate of the country accelerated putrefaction of animal matter, and the strict rules which Hindu society imposed, forbidding contact with such defiling substances, damped the zeal of the bolder spirits.[18] The Hindu physicians also lacked accurate knowledge of pulmonary diseases. It is curious that the very word for lung (kloman) is hard to find in the medical encyclopedias, despite the fact that the texts deal at length with consumption and other similar diseases ;[19] nor did they know the diseases of the brain whose functions they attributed to the heart.[20] Surgery had its early beginnings in India, as is evidenced by the Sanskrit names borne by surgical instruments still in daily use. But

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 298.

[16] The work was printed and published at Goa by Johannes de Endem on April 10, 1563. The first edition is extremely rare, and is full of typographical errors. It was one of the earliest books printed in India. Clusius (Charles de l'Escluze) made a sort of resumé in Latin in 1567 (Plantin, Antwerp). It is very different from the original. The same may be said of the Italian and French translations by Hannibal Briganti (Venice, 1582) and by Antoine Colin (Lyons, 1619) respectively—which are translations of the resumé in Latin. Orta is here called "Du Jardin"—cf. Markham, *Colloquies of Orta*, Introd., pp. xi-xii. The standard edition of Garcia da Orta is that of *Conde de Ficalho* in two volumes (Lisbon, 1891-95), issued by the Academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa. It is a model of editing.

[17] Orta, *op. cit.*, p. 308 (Markham's English translation).

[18] Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-75.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

the advances in this science which had been achieved in other parts of the world had left India untouched, with the result that the intervention of the surgeon was limited to such simple matters as incisions and amputations, extraction and scarification, and the treatment of wounds.[21] The Hindu physicians, however, were proficient in pathology and therapy, as explained in the classical texts, and could hold their own against their European colleagues :

> There are in Goa many heathen physicians (wrote Linschoten, who was in the service of the Archbishop of Goa at the close of the sixteenth century), which observe their gravities with hats carried over them for the sun, like the Portingales, which no other heathens do, but only ambassadors or some rich merchants. These heathen physicians, do not only cure their own nations (and countrymen), but the Portingales also, for the Viceroy himself, the Archbishop, and all the monks and friars do put more trust in them, than in their own countrymen, whereby they get great (store of) money, and are much honoured and esteemed.[22]

The European physician found it to his advantage to consult the Hindu doctor when his drugs failed to bring about a cure, and use the medicines prescribed in the Hindu Pharmacopoeia. In his turn, the native physician learned bloodletting and the use of the syrups and distilled water, and other therapeutic prescriptions which were in favour in the West.[23]

This synthesis of medical knowledge of the East and the West was brought about in the hospitals which the Portuguese opened for the treatment of the military personnel within the first few years of their appearance in India. The Franciscan friars, who were in charge of these hospitals, seem to have played a notable role in effecting this synthesis. In his instructions to Francisco de Almedia, the *Capitao Mor* of India, as early as March 1505, the Portuguese crown had insisted that he should take good care of the sick in the Portuguese fleet and do his utmost for their welfare. In order to safeguard their interests here and hereafter,

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
[22] Linschoten, *Voyages*, vol. I, p. 230.
[23] Orta, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-08, edition of Conde de Ficalho, vol. I, p. 230.

the solicitous sovereign ordered his captains to see that as soon as a man fell ill, he be asked to perform his religious duties and make his will and testament, and when a man died, an inventory should immediately be made of his property so that it could be handed over without loss or dimunition to the legatee.[24] These instructions, however, were found inadequate, for they did not provide for the wounded in the wars, nor for those that had contracted diseases that did not admit of a speedy cure. Francisco de Almedia therefore built a hospital in 1506 at Cochin, the first Portuguese settlement in India, where the sick and the wounded could undergo longer treatment. He appointed the necessary staff—a physician, a surgeon, and an infirmarian—and supplied the hospital with all that was necessary to nurse the patients back to health and vigour. This hospital of Santa Cruz, as it was called, was at first maintained with the subscriptions raised from among the Portuguese. These subscriptions were both in cash and kind ; and it is interesting that pepper, which the Viceroy and others had given in charity, was sent to Portugal for the purchase of certain necessities for the hospital from the proceeds of the sale. Soon fines were made over to it as also a part of the royal estate.[25] The hospital of Cochin was followed by hospitals of the same kind at other Portuguese settlements of Cananore and Chaul.

When Goa fell to the Portuguese, Albuquerque opened the Royal Hospital in this city, which he made the Portuguese Metropolis of the East, converting for the purpose a set of buildings close to the arsenal. The king regarded this hospital as the apple of his eye and was untiring in his efforts for its betterment. On December 22, 1519, he announced by a royal edict that all Christians could consult the royal physician in the city of Goa free of charge.[26] In March 1524, he issued special instructions to the authorities that they should strain every nerve in the cure and care of the patients, and should not stint the drugs that were in the pharmacy.[27]

With the accumulating experience, regulations were made for the efficient working of the institution. On September 26, 1519,

[24] *Documentacão, op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 30.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52, 55.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 361.
[27] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 25

Ruy de Mello, the Captain of the City, sent orders to the apothecary (*boticairo*) that unguents and ointments should be prepared in the presence of the physician on pain of a fine of ten *cruzados* for infringement of the order.[28] A regulation of June 17, 1520, required the purchaser of provisions (*comprador*) to receive payment for the provisions and other necessaries each month from the Factor in proportion to the number of patients. The *comprador* was required to receive instructions from the *provedor*, or supervisor, of the hospital as to the provisions to be supplied for the day. He was charged with the duty of ascertaining for himself, each night, how much of the supplies had been actually consumed, so that if any part be left over it could be accounted for in the next day's budget, and he was warned that any misappropriation on his part would be severely punished.[29] The free comforts provided in the hospital were attracting to it a large concourse of people, who resorted there on the slightest pretext. In 1524 it was found on investigation that among the patients lying in the hospital, a large number were in good health, while others were suffering from minor bruises sustained in brawls for the sake of women. These had gained admittance into the hospital through the influence of the authorities.[30] The inquiry also revealed that medicines were freely distributed to all and sundry in the town. Vasco da Gama, who was then the Viceroy, suppressed these abuses with a strong hand. The instructions issued in March 1524 forbade dispensing of medicines free of charge, except to those actually admitted to the hospital, and warned the Factor that if he sent any patient to the apothecary for medicine without the orders of the physician, the charges would be recovered from his salary.[31]

All sorts of ailments to which human flesh is heir were treated in these hospitals, specifically the Royal Hospital at Goa, which commanded the best available medical talent. The most serious and the commonest among these ailments was what was variously termed by the writers of the times as *moryxi*, *mordexi*, and *murxi*. "There reigneth a sickness called *Mordexijn*," writes Linschoten, "which stealeth upon men (and handeth them to such sorte), that it weakeneth a man, and maketh him cast out all that he hath

[28] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 354.
[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 362-63.
[30] Correa, *Lendas da India* in *Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, pp. 392-93
[31] *Documentacão*, vol. II, p. 25.

in his body, and many times his life withal. The sickness is very common, and killeth many a man whereof they hardly or never escape."[32] There was an outbreak of this disease in epidemic form during the rainy season of the year 1543. In his *Lendas da India*, Gaspar Correa, the historian, has given a vivid description of this plague, which carried off hundreds of people in the city of Goa: "During this cold weather there broke out in Goa a mortal affliction which the natives of the land call *moryxy*, affecting all qualities of persons, from suckling babes to old people in their eighties, no less than domestic animals and birds, in fact, all living things, male and female. It could be attributed to no cause, for it attacked the whole and the sick, the fat and the lean, and there was nothing in the world which could protect them. According to the doctors, the disease reached the stomach as a result of a chill; it was also said that they could not determine the aetiology of the illness. The disease was so strong and virulent that the food was turned immediately into poison. One vomitted and drank much water, and with the evacuation of the stomach and the cramps the nerves of his hand and the soles of his feet became contracted, resulting in unbearable pain. The patient was almost given up for dead with his eyes broken and the nails of his hands and feet dark and cramped. None of our physicians could cure this sickness. The patient lived only for a day or at the most for another night, and out of a hundred that were attacked hardly ten escaped. These were those who had with all speed treated themselves with the ordinary household remedies which the natives knew. Mortality was so high during this season that there was tolling of bells the whole time and they buried each day twelve, fifteen, or even twenty corpses. Lest it should cause panic among the people, the Governor ordered that there should be no tolling of bells in the churches. As the disease was of a malignant nature, the Governor ordered the doctors to dissect the corpse of the patient who had died of *moryxy* in the hospital. But the doctors found no sign of infection anywhere save that the stomach had contracted like that of a chicken and had become wrinkled like burnt leather. The doctors opined that the infection reaching the stomach had made it contract, which led to instant death. There was a considerable rise in the rates of burial. The clergy of the Cathedral could not suppress this abuse; and so Affonso

[32] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 235-36.

(sic) d'Albuquerque, the bishop, redistributed the parishes, and created the new ones of Santa Maria do Rosario and Santa Maria do Luz, a proceeding which led to much dispute, as the Cathedral clergy were sore that these parishes should take away the tithes of their parishioners."[33]

As their remedies were proving ineffective, the European physicians soon began incorporating into their treatment of the malady a few features of the native treatment. The Indian physicians kept the patient on rice gruel with pepper and cumin seed thrown in, which they called *canjee*. They cauterized the feet with hot iron, and tightly wrapped the head, arms and legs with very strong bands to stop the cramps, and gave the patient the betel nut to chew.[34] The European doctors cauterized the feet in the selfsame way, administered an emetic of boiled water with barley, cumin seed and sugar, and applied hot poultices to the body, rubbing it with warm oil from the neck to the toes. Other remedies were also tried with varying degrees of success—"*unicornio* and the *pao de contra erva*"—of Malacca. But the sovereign remedy, according to Orta, was the bezar stone.[35] Orta also held the view that the disease was caused by over-eating and wenching ;[36] while his description of its symptoms as a low pulse, cold sweat, burning heat, and vomitting,[37] taken together with the detailed account of it by Correa, leaves no doubt that the illness was cholera.

It is interesting to trace the transformation which the terms applied to this distemper in the Indian languages of the coastal tract underwent at the hands of the European writers. It was known as *morachi* or *morchi* in Gujarati, and *modshi, modachi* or *modwashi* in the Konkani and Marathi languages. These terms which were turned into *moryxy* by Correa, and *morxi* by Orta, were further corrupted into *mordexim* by subsequent writers. The Dutch and the French travellers, Linschoten and Pyrard, called it *mordexyn* and *mordesin* respectively. And the French, combining the sound of the word with the horrors associated with the disease, called it *morte de chien*. An early instance of this name in current use is

[33] Correa, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, pp. 288-89; Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 273-74, Conde de Ficalho's note.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 264

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

met with in the letters of the Jesuits—the *Lettres Edifiantes*—for the year 1702: "Cette grande indigestion qu'on appelle aux Indes mordechin, et que quelques uns de nos Français ont appellée mort-de-chien." The term was literally rendered as "dog's disease" in the English translation of the passage, and it gained currency in other European languages as well.[38]

Another disease much feared by the people was dysentery. It was of common occurrence and was considered a twin sister of cholera. It was therefore termed *mordexi-seco* or dry *mordexi* in local terminology.[39] The Portuguese physicians soon learnt to treat it both with external and internal remedies. For external treatment, they prescribed fomentation of the stomach with a decoction of cumin seed, followed by a massage with the oil of spikenard and castor,[40] while they gave the bark of the *avacari* tree mixed with another herb called the *coru* for internal use.[41]

Another common disease treated in the hospitals was syphilis. As Father Sebastião Pires observes, in his letter to the Portuguese Crown, of January 8, 1518: "Besides those who fall ill in your service, there are many others who are down with bubas, a sickness which is raging in these parts."[42] It would appear that this disease spread all over Europe in the form of an epidemic when in 1493 some members of Columbus's crew carried it into Spain on their first return voyage. They had contracted it on the island of Haiti from the local women. The physician Dias de Isla, who was in practice in Barcelona at the time, had actually treated a few of their number, including Martin Afonso Palos, the commander of the *Pinta*. In his book *Treatise on the Serpentine Malady*, which was composed in the Hospital of All Saints at Lisbon, Dias de Isla wrote:

> It has pleased divine justice to give and send upon us afflictions, never seen or recognized, nor found in medical books, such as this serpentine disease. . . . At the time that the admiral Xristoval Colon arrived in Spain, their Catholic Majesties were in Barcelona. And when he and his men went to give them an

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 275, Conde de Ficalho's note.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 266.
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 17.
[42] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 342-43.

account of their voyage and of what they had discovered, immediately the city began to be infected and the aforesaid disease spread, as was seen later on through long experience.[43]

His contemporaries, Oviedo (1478-1557) and Las Casas (1474-1566), both concurred with Dias de Isla in this opinion. In his *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, Oviedo observed: "These Christians, the first settlers of this island suffered moreover much difficulty from the disease of bubas (for the Indies are the place of their origin)."[44] In 1498 Las Casas was himself at Haiti where also he eventually wrote his *Historia General de las Indias*. He notes in this book:

> Let it be known in truth, this (disease) was taken from this island, either when the Indians left at the time when Admiral D. Christoval Colon returned with the news of the discovery of the Indies, which men I saw myself soon afterwards in Seville, and these were in a position to communicate it to Spain, by infecting the air, or in other ways; or when some Spaniards having already contracted the disease went on the first return voyage to Castile, and this could have happened between the years 1494 and 1496.[45]

The disease was carried into Italy when in the autumn of 1494 Charles VIII of France invaded the country, in order to make good his claim to the throne of Naples, with an army composed mainly of mercenaries, some of whom were Castilians infected with this malady. The contagion rapidly spread through the courtesans, and when the mercenaries returned home, they spread the disease in their respective countries. Naturally enough, no one wished to bear the responsibility for this new, grave and repulsive illness. And accordingly, while the French called it *morbo Napolitano*, the Italians termed it *morbo Gallico*, and as it had originated first in Spain, it was also called *morbo Hispanico*, or, as Garcia da Orta puts it, *sarna Castelhana*.[46]

[43] Pusey, *History of Syphilis*, pp. 21-22.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5; Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 107-08; Las Casas, *Historia General de las Indias*, cited by Pusey, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

There is hardly any doubt that it was the Portuguese who imported the disease into India, and it travelled with them wherever they betook themselves. Thus, speaking of Timor and other islands in the Far East in 1522, Antonio Pigafetta, a companion of Magellan in his first circumnavigation of the globe, observes: "In all these islands there rages an illness which the people call the Portuguese disease, and we in Italy, the French disease."[47] In Indian medical literature, it is mentioned for the first time by Bhavamisra, who flourished in north-west India in about A.D. 1550.[48] In his encyclopedia of medicine, Bhavamisra calls it *Phiranga roga* or Portuguese disease, and describes its three stages.[49]

Garcia da Orta acknowledges the fact that its importation into India and the Far East was due to Portuguese agency. But he remarks all the same that the disease had already existed in India as well as in China and Japan.[50] This question has since taken a controversial turn, and affording material for a whole series of publications, it has divided the historians of medicine into two opposing camps. While on the one hand the researches of Sudoff and his school make it difficult to believe that the disease came from the New World, on the other hand the partisans of the American thesis have reinforced their position with fresh critical studies and proofs in their support. These count among them such extremely conscientious scholars as Ivan Block who has produced a number of important works on the subject. Hence on a topic where scholarly opinion is so hopelessly divided, one can only try to sift out such elements in the controversy as appear to con-

[47] Orta, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-73, Conde de Ficalho's note.

[48] Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] Orta, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 259. According to A. C. Burnell, in his edition of Linschoten's *Voyage to the East Indies*, "the disease is clearly mentioned in Sanskrit medical books, which are previous at all events to 1500, under the title of *upadamca*. Wise (who did not know Sanskrit) was misled by his prejudices into denying that this is syphilis." Burnell rejects the view that this disease was imported into the East by the Portuguese, citing in his support Varthema's statement that he found the Zamorin ill of this disease *c.* 1505: "... el Re ... nel tẽpo mio staua mal contento per respecto che era in guerra col Re de Portogallo & anchora perche lui hauea el mal frãzoso & haueala ĩ la gola." ("... the King ... in my time was miserable because he was at war with the King of Portugal, and because he had the French disease, and had it in his throat.") Linschoten, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 239, f.n. 2.

stitute the two sides of the question in dispute, as Dr. Castagliani has done in his learned treatise *L'Histoire de la Medicine,* and conclude in his words :

> Justly examining the issue, the truth seems to be the golden mean. It is very probable that syphilis was known in Europe and in Italy before the close of the 15th century. And it is to this disease that the allusions of the ancient authors that are cited in support of this thesis are traced. But it was only after 1490, thanks to the general movement of troops in Europe, and above all, thanks to the invasion of Italy by the French troops, that the malady spread with such alarming rapidity and grave proportions, as to induce the belief that it had been imported into Europe by the ships proceeding from the New World.[51]

The therapeutics of syphilis entered a new phase with the introduction of mercury in its treatment. From early times mercury had been used with encouraging results in all manner of skin diseases, and it was precisely the manifestations of syphilis on the skin that made the physicians treat the new disease with this well-tried medicine. At first the prescriptions were very simple and consisted of an unguent of mercury and pig's fat with some aromatic substances such as sulphur, myrrh, and incense.[52] The prescriptions were improved in the course of the 16th century. The researches of Ernest Wickersheimer, in the *MS.* literature preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, have brought to light a number of interesting ones for unguents and ointments that were in vogue in France during the period. These prescriptions show how the simple treatment was elaborated as years passed, in the manner of applying the unguents, the necessary precautions against the variations in temperature, and above all, against cold and with regard to the therapeutics of stomatitis which mercury caused.[53] The results of the treatment were astonishing, although it also led to not a few cases of death at the hands of charlatans, especially in the beginning.

Both these remedies naturally found their way to the Portuguese

[51] Castagliani, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 374-75.

[53] Wickersheimer, *Sur la Syphilis aux XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles*, pp. 189-95.

hospitals in India. But as was to be expected, they did not prove useful in all cases. Hence the Indian medical world was delighted when a new specific was brought from China.[54] This was the root of China, or the Chinese *sarsaparilla*. The Portuguese physicians began to use the new drug from 1535, when the Governor Martin Afonso de Sousa learned of its efficacy from sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, who had been completely healed of the fell disease, by taking the root of China.[55] As soon as its efficacy had been sufficiently tested, the drug was introduced into Europe, where the report of the cure of emperor Charles V from gout, created for it a worldwide reputation. The celebrated physician and surgeon André Vesalio published a letter in 1546, in praise of the China root, mentioning the circumstance of the emperor's cure: *Epistola rationem, modum que propinandi radicis Chinae decocti, quo nuper invictissimus Carolus V imperator usus est.* When the learned André Laguna denounced its use, Matthioli, a greater scholar, entered the lists as its champion.[56]

The rules prescribed for the treatment with root of China were elaborate. In advanced cases a strong decoction was administered for the space of thirty days, and the patient was kept on a strict regimen of diet. If he complained of heat, the root was boiled less, or mixed with the water of endive or *fumus terrae* or the cow's tongue. The root was never administered during the hot weather ; nor was the treatment continued, if the patient found the heat impossible to bear. He was made to perspire morning and evening during the period, and had to be very careful not to expose himself. Often during the day the sores were fomented with warm water, and dressed with hot pads to mitigate the pain.[57]

Among the patients in the hospitals there were certainly a good many who were down with one kind of fever or another. "They have many continual fevers," observes Linschoten, "fevers, which are burning agues, and consume men's bodies with extreme heat, whereby, within four or five days, they are either healed or dead; the sickness is common and very dangerous, and hath no remedy for the Portuguese but letting of blood; but the Indians and heathens do cure themselves with herbs, *sandars*, and other such

[54] Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 260, 266.
[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 260-61.
[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 271-72, Conde de Ficalho's note.
[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 263-65 ; Linschoten, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 108-09.

like ointments wherewith they ease themselves."[58] According to Orta, the native physicians starved the patient for a week or two, and then gave him boiled water of mango to drink. And only when he was well on the way to recovery did they permit him to eat a little rice boiled with mango with the rind torn off.[59] The native treatment was too vigorous to be adopted by Portuguese physicians, who had perforce to fall back upon blood-letting and purgatives.[60] The purgatives, of which a dozen varieties were in use, fell into three broad divisions, laxative, mild, and drastic.[61] As a laxative tamarind seems to have been popular both among the country people and the Europeans. It was taken mixed with coconut oil by the former and with endive by the latter.[62] Other light purgatives were *cassia fistola* and ginger. The myrobalan, whose medical properties had been recognized by classical Hindu writers as early as the first century of the Christian era, was also recommended as a light purge. "I found (in the island of Goa)," writes Garcia da Orta, "three kinds of myrobalans, which they use as a purge, when they want to cause it without trouble and in a little quantity, and they call these three kinds, in the language of the land, *tinepala*, that is to say three kinds. The first, which is called *arare* by the people and *aritiqui* by the physicians, and known among us as *citrinos*, is round and purges the bile; the second is known among the people as *anvale*, and among us as *emblicos*, and the third which they term *rezanvale* and we as *indios*. There are, besides two others, the *gotem* (which we call *belaricos*) and the *quebulos*, which purge the phlegm and which in Bisnaga (Vijayanagar), Cambaia (Gujarat), and Bengala, are called *aretca*."[63] It is interesting to note that the Arabs learnt of the medical properties of this fruit chiefly through Charaka's *magnum opus* and passed on their knowledge thereof to Europe where it finds an honoured place in the *materia medica*.[64] The myrobalan was prescribed for so many different kinds of ailments that the Arabic writer Serapio, speaking of its universal use, said: "*et Xaruch* (Charaka) *Indus dixit in mirobolanis, universaliter mirobalani sunt*

[58] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 236.
[59] Orta, *op. cit.*, *passim*. [60] *Ibid.*
[61] Garrison, *An Introduction to the History of Medicine*, p. 123.
[62] Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 320.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 154.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60, Conde de Ficalho's note.

calidi et stiptici"—a remark literally translated by Orta as "*a quel hombre que tanto vio, mirabalanos comio.*"[65]

When a stronger dose of physic was called for, the physicians prescribed either the aloe or the rhubarb, the manna or the senna. Of these the aloe was the most important. It was the juice of a plant taken out when it had fairly dried out. This plant was available in certain parts of India, such as Gujarat and Bengal. But the one grown in Socotra was deemed the best, and was exported to all countries, including those of Western Europe. The use of the plant as a medicine had been recognized by the Greek writers of antiquity—Hippocrates and Galen, Plato and Aristotle, and, of course, by all the Arabic writers who learnt its use from the Greeks. On account of its remarkable healing properties, aloe was also prescribed in the treatment of wounds and in the cure of kidney and bladder trouble.[66] The drastic purgatives in use were the *almecega, catallacam, scamonium,* and *turbit. Almecega* was a resin from the gum-mastic, *Pistacia lenticus,* which belongs to the family of terpentine trees.[67] Orta thus describes the Indian way of taking this purgative :

> Following the rule of Avicenna, to comfort the stomach, they take two drams of almecega dissolved in rose water, and rub the stomach with the gall of the cow, and place on the navel cloth soaked in it to excite the operation and stimulate the expulsive power. This works as a good purgative. After having thus passed five hours, they drink three ounces of chicken broth very well tempered but eat nothing else. They sleep for some time, and then take a little quantity of rose water. . . . They believe that the natural quality (of the almecega) is strengthened by the broth, sleep and rose water.[68]

Turbit was considered the most powerful of purgatives, purging above all bile and phlegmatic humour. The drug consisted of the root and the lower part of the stock of a creeper of Indian

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 159-60.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29, 92, 275 ; *Documentacão,* vol. I, p. 155 ; vol. II, p. 60. The Hindu physicians gave a decoction made of the leaves of the aloe tree mixed with salt, and the mixture served as a mild purgative. Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 28-29.

[67] *Documentacão,* vol. I, p. 154.

[68] Orta, *op. cit.* vol. I, p. 35.

origin belonging to the family of *convolvulaceae*, and was known in Sanskrit as *triputā*. The Hindu physicians, distinguished between two kinds of *turbit*, the *svetā-triputā* and the *krishṇa-triputā* i.e., white and black. The first was very useful, while the second was reputed to be poisonous. The Arabs, when the knowledge of the root passed from India into Arabia, corrupted the name into *turbedh*, *turbad*, and *turbud*, and it is from the Arabic form that the name now commonly used, *turbit*, is derived. *Turbit* figured in the *materia medica* for a long time until it was replaced by an analogous drug belonging to the same family, *scamonium*.[69] *Scamonium* was so drastic in its effects that, as Orta observes, "a person purged himself more with only ten grains of *scamonium* than with an ounce of *cassia-fistola* and a dram of *rhubarb*."[70]

The *catallacum* too had a great vogue as a strong purgative. It was known among the Greeks as "Catholicos," meaning universal. And it was so named, because it was compounded of various simples, of which one was supposed to purge the bile, another phlegm, and the third melancholy and so forth, and also because it was useful for all ages and both sexes.[71]

Although the contemporary records do not mention all the diseases treated in the hospitals, it may be gathered from the drugs stored in the pharmacies what, generally speaking, these diseases must have been, as we know the ailments for which these drugs were prescribed. Thus, for instance, we learn from Orta, that the root of China was useful not only against *morbo Napolitano*, but also for paralysis and shivering fits and for such other common ailments as "arthritis, eczema, sciatica, gout, scrofula, indigestion, swellings produced by melancholy or by white turmors, old hurts, and stone and ulcers of the bladder."[72]

In a country teeming with reptiles a number of patients must have doubtless been brought to be treated for snake-bite. In all such cases the *pao da Cobra* was administered with successful results. "This tree grows like a pomegranate," Orta writes, "and is with the other trees of the forest that are neighbours to it, but leans to them in the same way as a gourd, and so the highest branches embrace the rest. I ordered cups to be made from the

[69] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 344-45, Conde de Ficalho's note.
[70] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 34.
[71] *Documentacão*, vol. I, pp. 366-67.
[72] Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 268.

tree for the sick, when they had been touched with poison, and I believe that it did them good. These cups also served to make them a posset of treacle, as some of our doctors prescribe, to prevent a poison from doing harm."[73] The root was imported from Ceylon, and it was from the Ceylonese that the rest of the world seems to have learnt its use.

Sandalwood was used both as an astringent and a tonic, and it was administered with milk in the treatment of gonorrhoea. The Sanskrit authors distinguished between two kinds of sandal, the yellow or the lime-coloured, called the *pita-chandana*, and the white called the *srikhanda*. But the two varieties were not from two trees. The coloured, which was heavier and aromatic, was merely the pith or the better part of the same trunk.[74] The red sandal which was rarer, was absolutely different from this sandal. It was the wood of a small tree of the family of *Liguminosae*, the *Pterocarpus santalus, Linn.*, found in the forests of South India, and specially the Western Ghats. It was also used as an astringent and a tonic, and was applied to the body for its cooling effect.[75]

Colic and such like ailments were cured with the *galanga*, a red root with many knots and a sharp taste.[76] Incense was used for curing the diseases of the head,[77] *folium indum* for provoking urine,[78] cloves for curing headache caused by cold.[79]

These hospitals thus became the repositories of the contributions to medical lore on the part of all the great peoples of the world —Hindu, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Arab, and modern European. At these centres the therapeutic prescriptions proceeding from these varied sources were put to a searching test, leading to the elimination of less efficacious drugs from the *materia medica*, which at present is verily the common heritage of the human race.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 289-90.
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 288.
[76] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 132.
[77] Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 352.
[78] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[79] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

CHAPTER XI

INDIA THROUGH EUROPEAN EYES

WE HAVE in the accounts of the Christian missioners and laymen who sojourned in India the reactions of the European mind to the religious, social, and political ideas of the Indian people from the times of John of Monte Corvino to those of St. Francis Xavier.[1] These impressions are noteworthy, coming as they do from honest men and keen observers, whose object was not to caricature the institutions of the people among whom they lived but to portray them as they appeared to them.

Naturally enough, it was the religious and social institutions that particularly drew the attention of these interested observers. It must, however, be remarked that on account of their ignorance of Sanskrit, in which the sacred texts of the Hindus are written, it was not possible for these foreigners, highly cultured though they were, always to form a correct estimate of their religious and philosophical ideas. All the same it is worthy of note that the monotheistic character of Hinduism was recognized by the earliest of missioners. As Friar Jordan of Sévérac wrote, while duly noting the anthropomorphic and tereomorphic representations of the deity, "over all Gods they place One God, the Almighty Creator of all these."[2] Later writers, such as Fernão Nuniz, the author of a valuable Chronicle of the empire of Vijayanagar (1535-37),[3] and Duarte Barbosa, one of the shrewdest observers that ever visited India,[4] were greatly

[1] The Letters of St. Francis Xavier have not been used in the present work, being clearly outside its scope. The opinion of the Saint on certain matters, however, have been discussed in the author's *Saint Francis Xavier, Apostolic Nuncio*, 1542-52, pp. 23-28.

[2] *Mirabilia Descripta*, p. 24.

[3] A copy of the original *MS.*, now lost (?), is in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. The Chronicle was probably written for the use of the Portuguese historian, João de Barros, who was then preparing his *Decadas*.

[4] He served in the factories of Cochin and Cananore for seventeen years till about 1516-17. His book was translated from a Spanish *MS.* by Lord Stanley in 1865 and from the Portuguese *MS.* by M. Longworth Dames in 1918-21, both for the Hakluyt Society.

impressed by the resemblance of the Trimurti to the Trinity. "These Brahmans," wrote Barbosa, "greatly honour the number trine: they hold that there is a God in three persons, and who is not more than one. All the prayers and ceremonies are in honour of the Trinity, and they, so to say, figure it in their rites, and the name by which they call it is this, Barmo (Brahma), Besnu (Viśṇu), Maycereni (Maheśvara)."[5]

It is of interest, however, to note that there is little in common between the Christian conception of God and the Hindu notion of the Supreme Being. The first character of God, as understood from the Jewish and the Christian revelation, is His unicity: "Hear Oh Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord."[6] From which it follows that there is an infinite metaphysical chasm between "Him who is" and ourselves, a chasm which separates the complete self-sufficiency of His own existence from the intrinsic lack of necessity of our own existence. Nothing can bridge such a chasm save a free act of the divine will. This act is the *creatio ex nihilo*. Now, in the Hindu idea of the Supreme Being there is no such chasm between this Being and other beings, which are co-eternal with it and commonly independent of it. The difference between it and the latter is one of degree only and not of kind or order, as in the Christian conception.

Again, the idea of the Hindu Trimurti (tri-icon) radically differs from that of the Christian Trinity. According to the Rudrahṛdaya Upanishad, the Trimurti "is the tree of the three worlds whose top is Viśṇu, whose centre is Brahma and whose root is Śiva." Another interpretation is that Viśṇu is the effect, Brahma the action, and Śiva the cause. The deity is one, functionally modified into three forms. A third interpretation is that Rudra is social convention (dharma); Viśṇu is the earth (jagat); and Brahma is

[5] Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, tr. E. J. Stanley, pp. 122-23. Writing between 1512 and 1515, Tomé Pires observes, "The whole of Malabar believes, as we do, in the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three in one, the only true God. From Cambay to Bengal all the people hold this (faith)." This observation is confirmed by D. João de Castro who says, when describing Cambay, that it "is inhabited by a people called *Guzarates* . . . among whom there were some men, like philosophers and religious men, who are called *Bramenes*, who believe in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, Holy Ghost and many other things of our very sacred law."

[6] *Deuteronomy*, VI, 4.

Sarvajñāna (all knowledge).[7] According to the interpretation of the Advaita philosophers the ultimate reality is qualified by three superimposed qualities, viz., qualities of light (sattva), passion (rajas), and darkness (tamas). When qualified by light, the result is Viśṇu (the preserver), when qualified by passion, the result is Brahma (the creator), and when qualified by darkness, the result is Śiva (the destroyer).[8]

In the Christian Trinity, on the other hand, the three persons are the one increate God, but three distinct subsistent persons. Nor can there be any effect in the procession of the persons, because the being communicated to the persons proceeding is the same increate being. The procession of the persons is due to the fact that the divine nature in its fullness demands that it be communicated to more than one person. The reason for this is the intrinsic quality of good to overflow. This overflow cannot result in another God, distinct in essence, but in another person. As Gilson has profoundly observed, "If, as is part of Christian Faith, such a God begets in virtue of his infinite fecundity, he must beget somebody else that is another person, but not something else that is another God. Otherwise, there would be two absolute acts of existing, each of which would include the totality of being, which is absurd. . . . Whence there follows, that whereas all that which the Christian God begets must of necessity share in the oneness of God, all that which does not share in his oneness must of necessity be not begotten but created."[9]

The early Portuguese writers such as João de Barros (followed by Francisco de Souza, the author of *Oriente Conquistado*), even believed that the Hindus had "some knowledge of the Incarnation of the Son of God," and of the Trinity. They were led into this belief by the conventional signature "Triambak" (a name of the god Śiva) in a copper-plate grant of Mādhava Mantri, governor of Goa, under the Vijayanagar emperor Harihara II, which they mistook for the Trinity, and the conventional invocation of the deity in the same record :

नमस्तुंगशिरश्चुंबिचंद्रचामरचारवे ।
त्रैलोक्यनगरारंभमूलस्तंभाय शंभवे ।।

[7] *Rudrahṛdaya Upanishad*, 1315.
[8] Mudhusudana Sarasvati, *Siddhāntabiṇdu*, v. 8.
[9] Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, pp. 52-53.

हरेर्लीलावतारस्य दंष्ट्रादंडः स पातु वः ।
हेमाद्रिकलशा यत्र धात्री क्षत्रश्रियं दधौ ।।

This invocation should have been translated as follows :

> A salute to Śambhu (i.e., god Śiva), who is the supporting pillar of the city in the form of the three worlds and who is lovely because of the *chowri* in the form of the moon which kisses the high head. May the staff in the form of tusks of the sportful incarnation of Hari (i.e., god Viśṇu) where the earth wore the royal splendour, being possessed of a pitcher in the form of the golden mountain (i.e., Mount Meru) protect us,

which the translator wrongly rendered to mean :

> In the name of God, Creator of all the three worlds, Heaven, the Earth, the Moon, and the Stars, whom they worship, and in him they give their good omen, and he it is who sustains them. To him do I render thanks and I believe in him, who for the sake of his people came into this world to be incarnate.[10]

It is therefore clear that the two ideas of the incarnation do not bear any similarity to each other. In the Hindu idea of *avatar*, the Supreme Being unites himself to another being of the same category, though of lesser perfection. In the Christian idea, on the other hand, one of the three persons, who is the Increate God Himself, the absolute self-sufficient act of existence, unites himself to the creature who is by himself absolute nothing.

At a lower plane, however, religion appeared to these observers as being somewhat idol worship, including that of "monkeys and cows and buffaloes and devils."[11] Domingo Paes, the author of another precious Chronicle of Vijayanagar (1520-22), speaks of a "round stone without shape" which was the chief object of worship in the principal pagoda at the capital. This was evidently the *linga* and possibly also the *yoṇi*, representing the union of the male and female principles. The significance of this symbol could not yet be grasped by the foreigners. Paes also describes

[10] Pissurlencar, "Um Passo do Cronista Barros Elucidado à Luz Duma Inscrição Sanscrita," *OP*, no. 18, plate facing p. 36.

[11] Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire* (Chronicle of Fernão Nuniz), p. 390.

an idol with six arms having at its feet a buffalo "and a large animal which it is helping to kill that buffalo." The image was plainly that of Durga Maheśāsuramardhini, the goddess killing the buffalo demon, which personified evil. In another temple Paes saw the popular god of good fortune—Ganeśa—with the body of a man and the head of an elephant. It had "three arms on each side and six hands" of which four were already gone, and the local prophecy was that when all fell the world would be destroyed.[12]

The foreigners could not but be struck by the deep veneration of the Hindus for the cow—a devotion whose rationale, even in our times, a Westerner finds difficult to appreciate. "These people have such a devotion for the cow," writes Nuniz, "that they kiss them every day . . . and with the droppings of the cows they absolve themselves from their sins as if with holy water."[13] In Western India Friar Jordan had observed the custom prevailing among the "great lords," to have the fattest cows brought before them every morning, whom they caressed in the belief that by so doing they would free themselves from illness. He also observes their excessive veneration for the bullock, and sought to explain this cattle worship by the fact that "oxen do all their services, and moreover furnish them with milk and butter, and all sorts of good things."[14]

The places of worship, which were often gems of indigenous art on which the builders lavished all their skill, could not fail to attract these cultivated observers. The Virupaksha temple, outside the walls of Vijayanagar, which Paes visited, was typical of these stately edifices. It stood in a courtyard surrounded by a verandah of pillars of stone. The exterior of its principal portal was covered with copper and gilded, and on either side of the roof were certain great animals in gilt which looked like tigers. The columns supporting the roof had each a contrivance for oil lamps, which were upwards of two thousand. Next to this shrine was a small one, like the crypt of some church, with two doors at the sides. From that point onwards the building was like a chapel, wherein stood the idol, which was the chief object of worship. There was no admission to this holy of holies except to the officiating priests, and access to it was closely guarded.[15]

[12] *Ibid.*, (Narrative of Paes), pp. 241, 261. Paes's *MS.* is also in the Bibliothéque Nationale of Paris.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 391.

[14] *Mirabilia Descripta*, p. 25.

[15] Sewell, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-61.

These temples invariably had *devadasis* or dancing-girls attached to them. The duty of these women was to perform the ritual dance before the deity during the daily religious service.[16] They also followed the triumphal car of the god which was dragged through the streets on festive days to the accompaniment of music and singing.[17] Although these women were loose fish they were highly esteemed, being ranked, as Paes observes, "among those honoured ones who are the mistresses of the captains."[18] They were as a rule very well off. Barbosa cites the instance of one of them, who, dying without issue, left all her property to the emperor. An inventory of her property made by the officers showed that it amounted to twenty thousand *pardaos*,[19] besides twelve thousand which she had bequeathed to one of her handmaids whom she had brought up from childhood.[20]

As is usual among people everywhere, the feasts which were observed by all and sundry occupied an important place in religious life. The chief of these was the *Navaratri*, which, falling in September, was celebrated with great éclat for nine consecutive days. This was the occasion for colourful pageants and ceremonies at the royal courts. Paes, who was present at Vijayanagar during this festival, says that the programme began each morning with the emperor going to his private chapel in the "House of Victory" to offer up prayers, followed by a concourse of chiefs and high officials, specially summoned for the festival. The prayers over, the emperor performed the symbolic worship of horses and elephants. He threw roses at the eleven horses and four elephants arranged in the square in rows and incensed these animals.

In the afternoon a ceremonial court was held. The emperor, seated on the dais, received the salutations of his nobles, captains, officers and soldiers, after which the dancing-girls in their rich and gorgeous costumes and wearing ornaments with diamonds, rubies and pearls, executed their classical dances. This was followed by wrestling matches at which the blows exchanged were so severe as to break the teeth, and put out the eyes and disfigure the faces so much so here and there men were carried off speechless by their friends.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 241. [17] *Ibid.*, p. 262. [18] *Ibid.*, pp. 241-42.

[19] A *pardão* was worth between 4s. 2d. and 4s. 6d. at this time. Cf. Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 675.

[20] Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 226.

At sunset there commenced a veritable feast of lights. The entire city was lit with torches from the place where the emperor took his seat even to the top of the walls and the battlements. In the arena mock fights were staged followed by graceful plays and contrivances. And when these amusements were over there were fireworks during a ceremonial parade of horses covered with trappings and cloths of very fine stuff of the emperor's colours, and with many roses and flowers on their heads and necks. The ceremony concluded each day with the maids of honour to the queens issuing forth from the palace and going round the horses three times accompanied by other women playing different kinds of music.[21]

But popular religion was also capable of expressing itself in forms which partook of the nature of animal and even human sacrifices. Paes reports, for instance, that in a certain temple at Vijayanagar sheep were slaughtered every day, their blood being offered as sacrifice to the deity in the temple, where also were left the heads of the sacrificial victims.[22]

Human sacrifices assumed many forms, and were specially prevalent in South India. According to Friar Jordan, sometimes when a person fell ill or met with misfortune he vowed his life to the deity on condition of being delivered. If he recovered, he fattened himself for a couple of years, eating and drinking nothing but unctuous foods. And then when the festival came round, he would go singing and playing before the deity, carrying with him a sharp sword with two handles. He would then apply the sword to his neck, and pull it so hard that the head would roll in an instant at the foot of the image.[23]

Nicolo Conti, a citizen of Venice, who visited India in A.D. 1432-33,[24] observed another form of self-sacrifice. The intending victim inserted his head into a sort of ring, the inside of which was provided with razor-like blades. He then gave a violent jerk to the chain attached to this contrivance, causing it to go round and making it sever his head from the trunk.[25]

Human lives were also sacrificed in consequence of the rank superstition of the age. Thus Paes tells us that when a dam, which

[21] Sewell, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-75.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 255.
[23] *Mirabilia Descripta*, p. 33.
[24] Charpentier, *The Livro da Seita Dos Indios Orientais*, p. XVIII, note 4.
[25] Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 27.

Krishna Deva Raya, the emperor of Vijayanagar, had built, burst two or three times, the Brahmans attributed it to the wrath of the god, and advised the emperor to appease the infuriated deity by offering to it the blood of men, horses, and buffaloes. And accordingly, Krishna Deva Raya, despite the fact that he was himself a man of sufficient enlightenment, ordered that the heads of sixty men should be cut off at the pagoda.[26]

Another hideous religious custom was what we may term the hook-swinging ceremony. According to Barbosa, if a young maiden took a fancy for a youth, she would vow to offer her blood to her god before the marriage was consummated. And then, if her wish was fulfilled, on an appointed day, she would be taken to the temple in the company of her relatives and friends. There two hooks, attached to an appliance like a water-lift, were pierced into her loins, and she was left hanging from it with blood dripping down the legs. After this offer of blood to the deity, in fulfilment of the vow, she was made over to the husband.[27]

A socio-religious institution peculiar to India was the cruel custom of Sati, i.e., the self-immolation of the widow by burning with the corpse of her dead husband. Writing *c.* 1615, Fr. Diogo Gonçalves, a Jesuit missioner, observes that the rite of Sati did not prevail among the people of Malabar, but was practised chiefly by the Badagas,[28] i.e., in Vijayanagar dominions. According to Pires, it was also widely practised in Goa :

> Among themselves they all rate this highly, and if they do not want to burn themselves to death their relatives are dishonoured and they rebuke those who are ill-disposed towards the sacrifice and force them to burn themselves. And those who will not burn themselves on any consideration become public prostitutes and earn money for the upkeep and construction of the temples in their district, and they die in this way.[29]

The West had heard of Sati ever since the days of the invasion of India by Alexander ; and the Greeks, seeking an explanation of this dreadful rite, were told that it arose from the apprehension

[26] Sewell, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
[27] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 220-22.
[28] Gonçalves, *Historia do Malavar*, p. 66.
[29] Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, p. 59.

that the wives would desert or poison their husbands.[30] Max Müller believed that the practice was given a scriptural justification by a skilful tampering with a hymn of the Ṛgveda which prescribed the funeral ceremonies of the Aryans. In the original Vedic rite the widow had to lie beside the corpse of her husband on the pyre and then descend from it before the torch was applied to it. This is evident from the exhortation in the hymn :

इमा नारीरविधवाः सुपत्नीराञ्जनेन सर्पिषा सं विशन्तु।
अनश्रवोऽनमीवाः सुरत्ना आ रोहन्तु जनयो योनिमग्रे (।।)[31]

i.e.,

> Let these unwidowed dames with noble husbands adorn themselves with fragrant balm and unguents.
> Decked with fair jewels, tearless, free from sorrow, first let the mothers advance to the altars.[32]

By the simple twirling of the sign for the subscribed consonant r (्र) in *agre* (अग्रे), the word read *agneh* (अग्ने), the genitive of *agni*, "fire," and the line, instead of "*Ārohantu janayo yonim agre*," meaning "let the mothers advance to the altars first," became "*Ārohantu janayo yonim agneh*," yielding the desired injunction : "let the mothers go into the womb of fire."[33]

Even if this suggestion is to be ruled out owing to the late appearance of Devanāgarī, the earliest traces of the employment of this script being in the Bodh-Gayā inscription of Mahānāman of A.D. 517—the evidence of palaeography would show that the change from *agre* to *agneh* could have taken place in a much earlier period when the Brāhmī script was in use. For the hand movement involved in writing the second syllables of both these words is essentially similar as far as the direction is concerned, save for a little difference which the actual forms of the syllable "gre" and "gneh" assume, denoting their distinct phonetic values. The syllable "a," the first of both the words under consideration, poses no problem. The second syllable "gre," in the former word,

[30] *Strabo*, XV, 1.30. [31] *RV*, 10 : 18 : 7.
[32] Griffiths, *The Hymns of the Rigveda*, vol. II, p. 407.
[33] Max Müller, *Selected Essays on Language, Mythology, and Religion* vol. I, p. 336 ; Thompson, *Suttee*, p. 17.

is composed of three signs, i.e., of "ga," "ra," and medial "e," while the syllable "gneh," in the word "*agneh*," is formed by the combination of the symbols of "ga," "na," and medial "e." The symbols of "ga," and medial "e" being common to both, "gre" and "gneh," they acquire different connotations only on account of the use of the syllable "ra" in the former word, and of "na" in the latter. In the Brāhmī alphabet used in the Aśokan edicts, the symbol for "ra" is a wavy or serpentine vertical line (ξ), while the symbol for "na" resembles an inverted "T" of the English alphabet, i.e., ⊥.

It is interesting to note that during the period of the supremacy of the Kushānas, Kshatrapas, and the Śātavāhanas, the wavy line of the Aśokan "ra" (ξ) was transformed into a straight vertical line tilting slightly towards the left (\). Under the circumstances, the change from "*agre*" to "*agneh*" involved only an addition of a horizontal line at the lower portion of the vertical line of the "ra," i.e., ʃ. [34]

A minute description of Sati by any foreigner, however, had to await Barbosa, whose account of it shows that he had made a very careful inquiry into the custom and had not allowed a single detail to escape him. He writes:

> The women are bound by very ancient custom, when their husbands die, to burn themselves alive with their corpses, which are also burnt. This they do to honour the poor husband. If such a woman is poor and of low estate, when her husband dies she goes with him to the burning ground, where there is a great pit in which a pile of wood burns. When the husband's body has been laid therein and begins to burn, she throws herself of her own free will into the midst of the said fire, when both their bodies are reduced to ashes. But if she is a woman of high rank, rich and with distinguished kindred, whether she be a young maid or an old woman, when her husband dies she accompanies the aforesaid corpse of her husband to the aforesaid burning ground, bewailing him, and there they dig a round pit, very wide and deep, which they fill with wood (and a great quantity of sandalwood therewith); and when they have kindled it, they lay the man's body therein, and it is burnt while she weeps greatly. Wishing to do all honour to her husband, she then

[34] Ojha, *Bhāratiya Prāchīna Lipimālā*, charts.

causes all his kindred and her own to be called together that they may come to feast and honour her thereby, all of whom gather at the said field for this ceremony, where she spends with them and with her kindred and friends all that she has in festivities with music and singing and dancing, and banquets. Thereafter she attires herself very richly with all the jewels she possesses, and then distributes to her sons, relatives and friends all the property that remains. Thus arrayed she mounts on a horse, light grey and quite white if possible, that she may be the better seen of all the people. Mounted on this horse they lead her through the whole city with great rejoicings, until they come back to the very spot where the husband has been burnt, where, they cast a great quantity of wood into the pit itself and on its edge they make a great fire. When it has burnt up somewhat they erect a wooden scaffold with four or five steps where they take her up just as she is. When she is on the top she turns herself round thereon three times, worshipping towards the direction of sunrise, and this done, she calls her sons, kindred and friends, and to each she gives a jewel, whereof she has money with her, and in the same way every piece of her clothing until nothing is left except a small piece of cloth with which she is clothed from the waist down. All this she does and says so firmly, and with such a cheerful countenance, that she seems not about to die. Then she tells the men who are with her on the scaffold to consider what they owe to their wives who, being free to act, yet burn themselves alive for the love of them, and to women she tells to see how much they owe to their husbands, to such a degree as to go with them even to death. Then she ceases speaking, and they place in her hand a pitcher full of oil, and she puts it on her head, and with it she again turns round thrice on the scaffold and again worships towards the rising sun. Then she casts the pitcher of oil into the fire and throws herself after it with as much goodwill as if she were throwing herself on a little cotton, from which she could receive no hurt. The kinsfolk all take part at once and cast into the fire many pitchers of oil and butter which they hold ready for this purpose, and much wood on this, and therewith bursts out such a flame that no man can be seen. The ashes that remain after these ceremonies are thrown into running streams. All this they do in general and without any hindrance, as it is the

custom of all. Those who do not do so they hold in great dishonour, and their kindred shave their heads and turn them away as disgraced and a shame to their families. And as for some who have not done it, to whom they wish to show favour, if they are young they send them to a temple there to earn money for the said temple with their bodies. . . . This abominable practice of burning is so customary and is held in such honour among them, that when the king dies four or five hundred women burn themselves with him in this way.[35]

According to Gonçalves, if the relatives of the intending Sati feared that she might desist from her purpose they themselves pushed her into the burning pit, throwing firewood and oil into it so that she may be quickly burnt up.[36] He adds that among the Śaivites who do not practise cremation the widow was buried alive with the husband's corpse.[37]

It is to the credit of the Portuguese that the great Albuquerque stopped this cruel custom in Goa as soon as it fell to them in 1510 to the utmost joy of the people, who were powerless to repeal a practice which had grown sacrosanct through long usage. As the author of the *Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque* has aptly remarked, "although to change one's customs is equal to death itself, nonetheless they were happy to save their lives and spoke very highly of him because he had ordered that there should be no more burning."[38] It is pleasant to note that later in the

[35] The procedure of widow-burning is thus laid down in the *Suddhitattva* (which perhaps describes the early stages of the rite) :

> The widow should bathe and clad herself in two white garments, carry kuśa (grass) bales in her hands, stand facing the east or the north, while sipping water (ācamana), think of the god Nārāyana, and make a declaration of resolve, calling to mind the hour and the date and invoking the eight lokapalas (guardsmen of the quarters) viz., the sun, the moon, fire, etc., as witnesses to her sacrifice, go round the fire three times, and ascend the kindled pyre as the Brahman recites the Vedic verse *ima narir* etc. (Rg. X, 18.7) and a Purāṇa verse "may these very good and holy women who are devoted to their husbands enter fire together with the body of the husband."

Kane, *History of Dharmaśastra*, vol. II, pt. I, pp. 634-35.

[36] Gonçalves, *op. cit.*, p. 67. [37] *Ibid.*

[38] *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, p. 94. Revived thereafter, the practice was put down during the governorship of Francisco

century this custom was discouraged in the Mughal empire, thanks to the influence of the Christian missioners. The Blessed Fr. Rudolfo Aquaviva, the head of the first Jesuit Mission to the Mughal Court (1580-83), so impressed on Akbar the sheer inhumanity of the custom that the latter declared it an offence to compel a woman to commit Sati against her inclination.[39] "On one occasion at Fatehpur Sikri," observes Francisco de Souza, the Jesuit historian, "Akbar invited the fathers to witness the immolation of a widow during the obsequies of her husband, extolling the unswerving devotion and constancy of the woman. But Fr. Rudolfo reprimanded the emperor severely for approving and encouraging by his presence such foolishness. Akbar accepted this reprimand, administered though it was in the presence of his *umras*, i.e., dukes, without the least sign of resentment, and the courageous stand by the Jesuit *Caciz* was much admired by the Moors."[40] This remonstrance so changed his attitude towards Sati that he was wont to use caustic words denouncing it : "the women of Hindustan rate their dear lives at a slender price. It is an ancient custom in Hindustan for a woman to burn herself, however unwilling she may be, on her husband's death and to give her priceless life with a cheerful countenance conceiving it to be a means of her husband's salvation. It is a strange commentary on the magnanimity of men that they should seek their deliverance through the self-sacrifice of their wives."[41]

SOCIETY

Like the Chinese pilgrims before them, the Christian missioners and travellers were favourably impressed by the simplicity of our people and by their guileless character. They were also struck by the cleanliness of their surroundings and the total absence of bickerings in their social relationships. "The people of India," writes Friar Jordan, "are very clean in their habits, true in speech, and eminent in justice, maintaining carefully the privileges of

Barreto in 1551, and its prohibition was rigorously enforced during the viceroyalty of D. Constantino Bragança, in 1557. Cunha Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez Oriental*, Fasciculo 5, supp. II, p. 501.

[39] *CHI*, vol. IV, p. 133 ; Smith, *Akbar, the Great Mogul*, p. 383.

[40] Souza, *op. cit.*, c. I, d. II, para. 63, p. 164.

[41] Abul Fazl-i-Allāmi, *The Ain-i-Akbari* (tr. from the Persian by H. S. Jarrett), vol. III, p. 398.

every man according to his degree, as they have come down from old times."[42] The institution which ensured this social harmony was the caste system, under which the community was divided into as many endogamous groups as the number of castes, which castes mutually recognized their duties and rights.

The system in its origin was not as rigid as it eventually came to be. The Aryans when they entered India were not divided into castes. The warriors of the community were the agricultural and industrial classes, and the Brahman priest was not necessarily a member of a hereditary class. But as the petty tribes coalesced into kingdoms, the need was felt of a separate body of administrators and warriors, which came to be designated as Kshatriyas. At the same time the industrial and agricultural classes hardly found time to interest themselves in matters of state in the midst of their heavy work; while on the other hand, what with the demand made on his time by the onerous duties of his office, the king found it burdensome to carry on his functions of *Pontifex Maximus* and was compelled to delegate them to other officials. The result of this process was the growth of a priesthood and of a class of warrior administrators in addition to a third class, who bore the burden of the day and the heat, the Vaishya, and a fourth one, the Shudra, consisting of the enslaved population.[43]

Except in the case of the members of the last caste, to whom life could have been nothing but misery, the system seems to have worked fairly well. It eliminated competition and conflict among the members and promoted harmony in the community. But the harmony which it achieved was at the expense of the dignity of the individual and the sacredness of the human person. Of course, it was too early to expect any recognition of the democratic principles of equality of opportunity and *la carrière ouverte aux talents* in Hindu society, as constituted in those medieval times, principles for the recognition of which in the State, although they were recognized and acted upon in the Church from early times, the West had to await the outbreak of the French Revolution and the rise of liberalism.

Under this fourfold division of society the Brahman became the recognized custodian of the culture of the community. "The Brahmans are like friars with us," writes Paes, "and they count them as holy men. . . .Those who have charge of the temples are

[42] *Mirabilia Descripta*, p. 22.

[43] *CHI*, vol. I, pp. 92-93.

learned men, and eat nothing which suffers death, neither flesh nor fish, nor anything which makes broth red, for they say that it is blood." But in the time of Paes the great majority of Brahmans had already invaded the domains of other castes. As Paes remarks, "Although the king has many Brahmans, they are officers of the towns and cities and belong to the government of them; others are merchants and others live by their own property and cultivation, and the fruits which are grown in their inherited grounds."[44] Nuniz found them honest and efficient in whatever profession they had chosen to follow, though on account of their weak physique they were hardly fitted for strenuous work.[45] "The kings made great use of these Brahmans," says Barbosa, "except in deeds of arms; only the Brahmans could cook the king's food, or else men of the king's own family, and so all the king's relations have this same custom of having their food cooked by Brahmans. These are the messengers who go on the road from one kingdom to another, with letters and money and merchandise, because they pass in safety in all parts, without anyone molesting them, even though the kings may be at war."[46]

Under a peculiar system prevailing in Malabar, marriage in the Brahman households was permitted only to the eldest sons, who alone were heirs to the family property. These kept their wives closely guarded and in high esteem, not remarrying on the death of their spouses. As to the younger sons, they were welcome in the families of nobles, whose women deemed it an honour to have children of these Brahmans.[47]

The matriarchal system which prevailed among the Nairs, the Kshatriya nobility in Malabar, lent itself to this abuse. The Nairs rarely married and had their nephews, the sons of their sisters, as their heirs, with the consequence that their women, while going through a formal marriage ceremony, "did what they pleased with Brahmans or Nairs."[48] The marriage bond was so loose that at times a Nair woman took four paramours at a time without anyone thinking ill of her.[49] "These women are very clean and fare very

[44] Sewell, *loc. cit.* [45] *Ibid.*, p. 390.

[46] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, tr. Stanley, p. 123.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 121. [48] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 127. In contrast to polygamy prevailing among the Malabar princes, "the common people," observes Fr. Diogo Gonçalves, "go to the other extreme (polyandry), thanks to their dire poverty, chiefly the Nayres. These latter, being soldiers, are generally lazy. They are not able to support

well," concludes Barbosa, "and consider it a matter of great honour and gallantry and pride themselves greatly thereon, to be able to give pleasure to men, and it is an article of Faith with them that every woman who dies a virgin is damned."[50]

This unseemly feature of their family life apart, the Nairs constituted the most important section of the population. Tomé Pires estimated their number at one hundred and fifty thousand, and remarks that "they are fighting with sword and bucklers, and archers."[51] Being a military estate, careful attention was paid by the state to their education. According to Barbosa, they were sent to a military school when they were seven years of age to be taught and exercised by skilled masters of the art of warfare, the Panikkars, who were themselves captains in the army. Here they learned all manner of feats of agility and gymnastics for the use of their weapons. They first learned to dance, and then to tumble, and after they had had enough of this exercise, each was taught the use of weapons for which he showed a natural aptitude such as bows, clubs or lances, while everyone underwent a compulsory training in fencing and in the use of the sword and buckler.[52] They followed the profession of arms all their lives, and no Nair, according to Pires, "when he is fit to take up arms, can go outside his house unarmed even if he be a hundred years old, and when he is dying he has always his sword and buckler by him, so close, that if necessary he can take hold of them."[53] When they were drafted into the military service, the Nairs pledged themselves to live and die for the king. In the event of the king falling in battle, they had to rush on the enemy even when they were hopelessly outnumbered, and were sure to be slain in the attempt; while those who were absent from the field were expected not to rest until they had avenged the death of their sovereign. On account of their traditional loyalty, the Nairs were often hired out as bodyguards and the king himself, says Barbosa, dared not command the execution of a man who was guarded by them.[54]

Corresponding to their high position as the ruling class, the Nairs enjoyed a great many privileges. When a Nair passed

their wives, and agree to share them with others, and thus it happens that one woman is kept (*amigada*) by many." Gonçalves, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

[50] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 54.

[51] Pires, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

[52] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 39-40; Barbosa, *op. cit.* (tr. Stanley), p. 128.

[53] Cortesão, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 128-29.

through the streets the commoner was required to give way to him under penalty of death, even though the commoner was rich and respectable and one whom the king favoured.[55]

In Northern India there was a class of knights called the Rajputs, who in their family life were entirely different from the Nairs. The Christian visitors, however, did not know them well enough. About them Barbosa merely says, "They are good knights and great archers, and they have many other kinds of arms with which they defend themselves from the Moors, without owning any king or lord to govern them."[56]

The third or merchant class consisted of two distinct sets of people—the Banyas of Gujarat in Western India and the Chettis of the South—who between them held the monopoly of internal trade. Both were equally enterprising, and had settlements even overseas. When, on his first voyage to India, Vasco da Gama sailed along the eastern coast of Africa, he saw the establishments of the Banyas at Mombassa and Melinda, and mistook them for Christians.[57] The Banyas were strict vegetarians, "refraining from killing, or eating anything that suffered death." Their conception of charity went so far as to make them purchase birds from their captors for the sole purpose of giving them liberty. They scattered sugar to the ants, believing that they were thereby giving alms to the poor. They maintained hospitals for birds where the ailing ones were treated and were then let off. They fasted often, the more religious even for twenty days at a time, partaking during such days only of bare nourishment at night consisting of a little sugar with water or milk.[58]

The Chettis were engaged in all manner of trade. They were such shrewd and calculating businessmen that this trait of theirs had passed into a proverb so that it was usual, when one wished to compliment another for his subtlety, or to nag him for his parsimony, to call him a Chetti. It is worthy of note that the verb "chatinar," to trade, which was derived from "Chatti," and the word "Chatti" itself, in its double sense, had already become current among the Portuguese in the first half of the sixteenth century.[59]

The privileges which the Chettis enjoyed were in direct propor-

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[57] *Roteiro da Viagem de Vasco da Gama*, p. 41.
[58] Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 104-06.
[59] Barros, *op. cit.*, Decada I, pt. II, p. 330.

tion to their economic importance. Thus, for instance, they alone could remain seated in the presence of the king—a privilege which was allowed to none else except the Brahmans. They were permitted the use of the more respectable conveyance, the palanquin, while others could only use the "andor." Then again, they enjoyed immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the state, and when any of their number committed a crime, he was allowed to be tried by judges of his own caste. And lastly, like the Brahmans, they could pass without suffering molestation from one kingdom to another, even when these kingdoms were at war.[60]

In the sliding scale of inferiority, next came the potters, the washermen, the weavers, who were all servants of the community, and then the slaves—the Tivers, the Moguers, the Canions, the Ajare, the Macuas—who all belonged to the fourth caste of Shudras. The first three classes of servants followed their separate trades, and lived on the pittance that was given to them in payment for their service. The only prerogative which they enjoyed was that the members of the nobility, the Nairs, could keep their women as mistresses. The Nairs having such connections were, however, enjoined to enter their own houses only after washing themselves and changing their clothes.[61] The slave castes supported the gentry with their labour—the Tivers by cultivating the palm trees, the Moguers, who were fishermen and mariners, by transporting the king's property when he was on the move, the Canions by soothsaying for their masters, the Ajares by quarrying and other trades such as carpentry and metallurgy, and the Macuas by catching fish.[62]

Beyond the pale of the four castes were the untouchables, who, in Malabar, fell under two broad divisions—the Pulery and the Hiravas. They lived in swampy fields and desert places on the outskirts, and supported themselves by tilling the fields. "These people are so accursed," says Gaspar Correa, who, starting life in India as Secretary of the great Afonso d'Albuquerque, possessed a first-hand knowledge of Malabar, "that they cannot go by any road without shouting, so that the Nairs may not come up suddenly and meet them, because they kill them at once, for they always carry their arms, and these low people may not carry arms to defend themselves, and when they go along thus shouting, if any Nair

[60] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-59.

[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 134-36.

[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-40.

shouts to them they at once get into the bush very far from the road."[63]

These people were now increasingly turning to Islam, finding in conversion to it a means of emancipation from their present misery. The Naiteas, as the Muslims were called in Malabar, were mostly of foreign origin, being descended from Arab traders who had taken native wives and settled in the country. They were esteemed highly by the people on account of their boundless wealth derived from overseas trade, which was almost entirely in their hands. They were naturally unaffected by caste rules and moved freely among the high and the low alike. With the influence which they commanded at the courts of the country powers, they easily got the princes to agree that when an untouchable turned Muslim he should be permitted to the privileges which were enjoyed by the Muslims. In order that this permission may be granted the more easily, they pretended that they met with great difficulties in transporting their merchandise, as the labourers, being untouchables, could not go about freely for fear that the Nairs would kill them, while, on the other hand, if their proposal was accepted, they would be able to transport their goods and sell them in the provinces, a circumstance which was bound to be of benefit to the princes.[64] The untouchables had nothing to lose but their chains in changing their religion, and gladly accepted the invitation to convert themselves to Islam.

People as a rule practised monogamy, especially the Brahmans and the humbler classes. The princes as well as the rich, who could afford to maintain a number of wives, were an exception to this rule and enjoyed the privilege of polygyny. The laxity of the marriage tie and the limits to which the licentiousness was carried are vividly brought out by Barbosa in his description of the royal seraglio at Vijayanagar:

> The king has in his palace many women of position, daughters of great lords of the realm, and others as well, some as concubines, and some as handmaids. For this purpose the fairest and most healthy women were sought throughout the kingdom, that they may do him service with cleanliness and neatness,

[63] Correa, *Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, p. 155; Barbosa, *op. cit.* (tr. Stanley), p. 143.

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57.

for all the service is carried out by women, and they do all the work inside the gates, and hold all the duties of the household. They are all gathered inside the palaces, where they have in plenty all that they require, and have many good lodgings. They sing and play and offer a thousand other pleasures as well to the king. They bathe daily in many tanks, of which I spoke above, as kept for that purpose. The king goes to see them bathing, and she who pleases him most is sent for to come to his chamber. The first son born, whether of one woman or another, is heir to the kingdom. There is such envy and rivalry among these women with regard to the king's favour, that "some kill others" and some poison themselves.[65]

The women, though they enjoyed certain immunities, such as exemption from capital punishment,[66] were relegated to an inferior position. Even among the Nairs, where she enjoyed a considerable measure of freedom, if any woman offended against the law of her caste, and the king knew of it before it was known to her kindred, he could order her to be taken and sold out of the kingdom to the Moors or the Christians. If, however, her kinsfolk knew of it at first, they could take the law into their own hands, and were not answerable to the state even if they put her to death.[67] In other parts of India a woman could not own property in her own right and consequently, as Afonso Mexias notes in the Charter of the usages and customs prevailing among the *gauncars* and workers on the island of Goa, drawn up on September 16, 1526, no one could inherit from her.[68]

In a sub-continent like India, beneath the cultural unity promoted by the Hindu religion, it was natural that there should exist a diversity in the different parts of the country in relation to customs as well as dress. Thus in Malabar both men and women went about unshod and bare but for a piece of cloth wrapped round the waist.[69] Here the wearing of many clothes was a positive discomfort owing to the excessive humidity, whereas under the different climatic conditions of Gujarat, people sported gay and

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

[66] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 32. [67] *Ibid.*

[68] Cunha Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez Oriental*, Fasciculo 5, pt. 1, p. 129.

[69] *The Travels of Ludovico Varthema* (A.D. 1503-08), tr. J. W. Jones, pp. 124, 143.

ample clothes. They wore a shirt and covered themselves from the waist downwards with rich silks, walked on embroidered shoes of good leather and fine workmanship. The women were likewise elegantly dressed in silks, wore jackets of the same stuff, with rings of gold and silver on their ankles and toes, and large coral beads and bracelets on their arms, with necklaces of gold filigree hanging down their necks.[70] But it was at Vijayanagar that one met the best dressed people in India. The women wore the traditional *Sari* of white cotton or silk of pretty colours. They wore sandals of gilt and well-worked leather on their feet, and bedecked themselves with a variety of jewels—ear-rings, necklaces, bracelets, and the like. The men girded themselves with a piece of cloth made of cotton, silk or brocade, worked into many folds, and wore a shirt which reached halfway down the thigh, with a cloak of cotton stuff or silk on their arms. Like their womenfolk, they also wore sandals.[71]

A custom prevalent throughout India was that of chewing the betel-leaf. At the audience given to him by the Zamorin of Calicut, Vasco da Gama noticed that his chief Brahman gave his royal master from time to time this green leaf. Correa says that it was "closely folded with other things inside, which the king ate and spat into the cup."[72] Ready-made betel was sold at every street corner.[73] But in families, where it was generally eaten after meals, the mode of taking it was first to chew the areca nut, and then follow it up by putting the leaf into the mouth after pulling off the vein and smearing it with lime. According to Garcia da Orta, when an inferior went to speak to his superior, he invariably chewed the betel in order to deodorize his breath. And it constituted an important part of the make-up of a woman, especially when she wished to meet her lover. It was not eaten during days of mourning following the death of near relatives, as also on days of fast.[74]

POLITICS

In matters of administration the king was the pivot on which the whole machinery of the state turned. He was assisted by a council

[70] Barbosa, *op. cit.* (tr. Stanley), pp. 52-53.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.
[72] Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
[73] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 64.
[74] Orta, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 391-92.

of ministers with the prime minister at its head.[75] Much of the time of the king seems to have been taken up with the settlement of cases that were referred to him for adjudication, both original and appellate. He was the fountainhead of justice, and his sense of duty in this matter, at least in Vijayanagar, was so high that, if we are to believe Nuniz,[76] nothing was allowed to interfere with the discharge of this important function of kingship. Direct access was allowed to the emperor at all times even when he was out riding for recreation and exercise. On such occasions the plaintiff usually took a shaft of a spear, and tying a branch to it, went about calling out, when everyone made way for him and the complaint was inquired into by the king on the spot. If the case was simple enough, the king settled it by himself and commanded the captains to carry out the decree. A different procedure was followed when the plaintiff chose to present himself in person at the court. He prostrated himself before the throne remaining in that position till he was asked what his complaint was. Thus the king was a court of original jurisdiction as well as an appellate tribunal.

The rule laid down in the Dharmashastras, or the law books, however, was that the king should not decide any case by himself but that he should follow the advice of the judges. Manu states definitely that the king should enter the Hall of Justice without dress or ornaments. He should examine the causes of the litigants assisted by learned Brahmans and ministers proficient in statecraft. He should cultivate equanimity of temper and freedom from greed, and decide the cases in accordance with the prescriptions of the Dharmashastras.[77]

The jurisconsults of ancient and medieval India divided the process of law into two distinct stages, viz., of law and of fact. They recognized that it was not possible to lay down minute rules for the determination of fact, and allowed ample latitude to the king or the judge to use his discretion. Accordingly, in regard to fact, the texts contented themselves merely with the counsel that the king and the judge should keep an open and impartial

[75] Barbosa, *op. cit.* (tr. Stanley), p. 89; Sewell, *op. cit.* (Narr. of Paes), p. 268.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

[77] Kane, *History of Dharmasastra* (Ancient and Medieval Religions and Civil Law), vol. III, pp. 268-69.

mind and hear cases in public. But with regard to points of law they were solely to be guided by the rules laid down in the law books, while in cases which were not governed by texts they were required to decide in accordance with the recognized custom of the country. "If a king decides (a case) by his own *fiat*," warns Kātyāyana in his *Smriti* or law book, "where there is a text (of the Shāstra applicable to it), it leads him away from heaven, it causes ruin to the people, it brings (danger) to the king from the armies of his foes and it strikes down the roots of (long) life ; therefore the king should decide the causes of people according to the rules of Shāstra ; but in the absence of *Smriti* texts he should carry out (judicial administration) according to the usages of the country."[78]

These rules seem to have been faithfully observed at the Vijayanagar Court though, thanks to their inability to make careful distinctions, this is not quite clear from the accounts of the foreigners. As Barbosa writes :

> This king has a house in which he meets with the governors and his officers in council upon the affairs of the kingdom ; and there all the great men of the realm go to see him with great gifts ; and he dispenses great favours and likewise great punishments to those that deserve them. These great men, his relations, and those of great lineage, when they commit crimes or do anything prejudicial to his service, are summoned to him ; and they have to come immediately : and they come in very rich litters on men's shoulders, and their horses are led by the bridle before them, and many horsemen go in front of them. They get down at the door of the palace and wait there with their trumpets and musical instruments, until word is brought to the king, and he commands them to come to his presence ; and if they do not give a good excuse and account of themselves and of the evil of which they are accused, he commands them to be stripped and thrown on the ground, and there bids them to receive many stripes.[79]

The view seems to have prevailed at this time in India that theft and such other offences could not take place except with the connivance of the police officers. Thus in Northern India, Sher

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 269-70.

[79] Barbosa, *loc. cit.*

Shāh (1540-45), one of the ablest of the Delhi sultans, ordained that if a theft was committed in any place, and the thieves were not caught, the police officers of the locality should be compelled to make it good. According to Nuniz, if a complainant could prove in Vijayanagar that he had been robbed in a particular province, the emperor summoned the captain of that province to his presence, and ordered him to track down the thief on pain of himself being seized and his property confiscated. In like manner the chief bailiff was held responsible for all thefts at the capital.[80] Though the system would appear unreasonable and primitive, it worked with terrible efficiency. The police were always on the alert, with the result that no potential offender could escape their watchful vigilance.[81] Under the peculiar system prevailing in Malabar, the stolen property was not restored to the owner if the thief was caught. But if he escaped, while the stolen goods were found, the state kept only a quarter thereof. The idea was that the owner should be content with the punishment of the thief, while the state should itself be compensated for the trouble in apprehending him by retaining the goods.[82]

Torture was used in Malabar as a midwife to truth. If the thief still persisted, they had recourse to trial by ordeal. After ceremonial ablutions, the accused was led to a temple, where, in the presence of the icon he was made to dip two of his fingers in boiling oil while uttering the formula: "I did not commit the theft of which I am accused, nor do I know who did it." The fingers were then dressed with a bandage to which seals were attached. On the third day the bandage was untied in the open court held at the same temple. And if it was found that the fingers had been burnt, the thief was put to death. In the case of Muslims, the ordeal took another form, and instead of hot oil, the accused was made to lick a red hot axe.[83]

In Vijayanagar mutilation was the penalty for small thefts, while big ones were punished with death. Traitors paid the penalty by impalement on stakes, or by being thrown to the elephants.[84] According to Varthema (1503-08), in Calicut this punishment was also meted out to murderers, while physical injury was paid for by a fine. In this land of strange customs, a creditor could

[80] Sewell, *loc. cit.*
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 381
[82] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-17.
[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.
[84] Sewell, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-84.

recover his debt by drawing a circle on the ground around the debtor with a twig, while uttering the words: "I command you by the head of the Brahmins and of the king, that you do not depart hence until you have paid me and satisfied me as much as I ought to have from thee." The debtor dared not leave the circle without settling the debt, for if he did so the king would put him to death provided, of course, there was documentary evidence of what the creditor alleged was owing to him.[85]

In Malabar judicial administration was well organized. The chief justice who was called "Coytoro," had subordinate judges under him, to whom he farmed out the administration of justice. These latter were allowed to try offences which were not capital, and retain for themselves the fines and perquisites arising from their courts.[86]

For purposes of civil administration the kingdom was divided into provinces, which were under provincial viceroys or governors. These governors were responsible for the collection of taxes and for the maintenance of peace and order. They compounded the revenue with a lump sum at the exchequer, and in their turn appointed tax gatherers to collect the amount. From the income which they derived, they kept an armed force in their province ready for service.[87]

According to Barbosa, the army at Vijayanagar amounted to a hundred thousand men, both horse and foot, who served on the basis of regular payment. Attached to the army was a corps of six thousand women, who accompanied the troops to the field of battle. These women were recruited in the belief that it was not possible to bring an army, nor carry on war without women. "They were like enchantresses and great dancers, and their presence often attracted troopers from other kingdoms."[88] The kings of Vijayanagar always kept nine thousand elephants in their stables.[89] These elephants were well-trained to play their part on the field of battle. They wounded with their trunks both man and beast and caused panic in the ranks of the enemy. But they were also a source of danger to their own side, for when they were themselves wounded they would suddenly take to flight, throwing the army into confusion which would almost always end in a rout.[90]

[85] Varthema, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48. [86] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[87] Sewell, *op. cit.*, (Nuniz) pp. 379, 384-89; (Paes) p. 281.
[88] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [89] *Ibid.*, p. 87. [90] Dames, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 118

In consonance with his high social position the king lived in great pomp and circumstance. Speaking of the emperor of Vijayanagar, Nuniz remarks: "The king never puts on any garment more than once, and when he takes it off he at once delivers it to certain officers who have charge of this duty, and they render an account; and these garments are never given to anyone. This is considered to show great state. His clothes are silk cloths of very fine material and worked with gold, which are worth each one ten pardãos; and they wear at times *bajuns* of the same sort, which are like shirts with a skirt; and on the head they wear caps of brocade which they call *culaes* and one of these is worth some twenty cruzados. When he lifts it from his head he never puts it on."[91]

The emperors of Vijayanagar also maintained a large harem. According to the account of Nuniz, there were no less than five hundred women living in the palace, each in an apartment with her maid-servant. Twenty-five to thirty of the most favoured among these accompanied him on his royal progress, each one in her palanquin with poles.[92] There were, besides, four thousand others in the palace. Some of these were dancers, others musicians, and others still who carried the palanquins of the king's wives on their shoulders. There were also among these women astrologers and soothsayers and those whose duty it was to keep the accounts of the expenses of the palace, and others who chronicled the events of the day in the empire and compared their books with those of the writers outside.[93]

It will thus be seen that the observations of the Christian missioners and laymen who sojourned in India are a valuable source for reconstructing the picture of the social, religious, and political institutions in our country.

[91] Sewell, *op. cit.*, p. 383.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 370.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this survey of fifteen centuries of Christianity in India, we may be permitted to reiterate that the apostolic origin of the Indian Church is borne out by an unbroken tradition going back to antiquity. It is also supported by the independent witness of the writers of the early Christian centuries, who had no doubt in their mind as to the part of the world evangelized by the two apostles of Christ—St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew.

Nor were the places, to which these Apostles betook themselves, chosen at random. In the vast sub-continent of India it was only at Takshaśila, Kalyan, and Cranganore, that they could find Jewish colonies to make a start, in conformity with the early apostolic practice to preach the Gospel to the Jew first and then to the Gentile.

It is also now obvious that when Origen spoke of Parthia as having been the field of the apostolate of St. Thomas, he must have meant the Punjab, which was then under Parthian rule. Parthia is generally understood to mean Persia, but in the present context it can, under no circumstances, be made to apply to Persia, for the simple reason that the Persian Church has never claimed apostolic origin. For instance, in the course of a vigorous polemic on the antiquity of his See towards the end of the eighth century, Timothy I, the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, could go only as far as to say :

> We have had Christianity nearly five hundred years before the birth of Nestorius, about twenty years after the Ascension to heaven of Our Lord.

Needless to say, nothing could have supported the claim put forward by the Catholicos better than the fact that St. Thomas had himself preached the Gospel in Persia, had there been any tradition to that effect. On the other hand, the *Acts of Thomas*, a work written at the beginning of the third century in Edessa, or some other place in Upper Mesopotamia—i.e., in or about the same region—definitely associates St. Thomas the Apostle with the

Punjab. The ingenious suggestion of Father Dahlmann, that it is the Christian colonists from Persia that transplanted this tradition of St. Thomas's apostolate in Malabar from their own country, is thus proved to be groundless. It has also been shown that no new evidence has been discovered of such a revolutionary character as to disturb and upset the old and established chronology of the Scythians and the Parthians, despite the appearance of Dr. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw's *The "Scythian" Period in Indian History*. Her conclusions, which are demonstrably erroneous, have failed to find acceptance at the hands of scholars who can speak with authority on the subject, both in India and abroad. The book, however, has stampeded a certain school of historical writers in Kerala into abandoning totally the tradition of the apostolate of St. Thomas in North India, and into asserting that South India alone was the field of his labours. What is more deplorable is that they have sought to base their contention on the South Indian legends of an admittedly later day, which were clearly inspired, if not by the *Acts* itself, by the original story which the *Acts* dramatized.

As for St. Bartholomew, high authorities on ecclesiastical history such as Eusebius and St. Jerome, connect him with India. We have shown that it is at Kalyan (Bombay) on the Konkan coast, that he founded his church. This church, however, had a chequered career. For one thing, the Christian community had, for some reason, secured neither protection nor privilege from the local rulers. For another, when this part of the coast was incorporated in the sultanate of Delhi, the Christians came in for their share of the persecution at the hands of the Muslims —sultan Mubarak I (1317-21) having extended its boundaries along the coast so as to include the whole of North Konkan, at the expense of the local Hindu dynasties, the Yadavas and the Silāhāras.[1] As Friar Jordan of Sévérac observed:

> In this India (India the Less) the greater part of the people worship idols, although a great share of the sovèreignty is in the hands of the Turkish Saracens, who came forth from Multan, and conquered and usurped dominion to themselves not long since and destroyed an infinity of idol temples, and likewise many churches, of which they made mosques for Mahomet, taking possession of their endowments and property. 'Tis grief to hear and woe

[1] *Bombay Gazetteer* (Thana), vol. XIII, pt. 2, p. 438.

> to see! . . . . In this India (India the Less) there is a scattered people, one here, another there, who call themselves Christians, but are not so, nor have they Baptism, nor do they know anything else about the Faith. Nay, they believe St. Thomas the Great to be Christ.[2]

These could not have been the only reasons for the disappearance of Christianity from Bombay and the Konkan. Other reasons have probably to be sought in the long neglect of this part of India by the Persian Church and its ecclesiastical colonialism. Had the Persian Church taken due care to train an indigenous clergy and established an Indian hierarchy, there is no doubt but that Christianity would have weathered the storm on the otherwise hospitable Konkan coast. The church of St. Bartholomew had all but completely disappeared in the fourteenth century.

But even in Malabar the church had long ceased to preach the Gospel to the non-Christians. On account of their economic power, the Christians had created a strong and comfortable position for themselves, being regarded as the equals of the Brahmans. Like the latter, they would not allow themselves to be touched by persons of other castes, who were required to make way for them in the streets as they passed, under penalty of death. Understandably enough, a community which had attained to such a high status would not agree to endanger its position, both economically and socially, by indiscriminate additions to its ranks of persons belonging to the less advanced castes. The church thus became a closed corporation, like the fire temples of our times in Bombay, where there is no admission except for Parsis. I agree with my esteemed scholar friend, Rev. Fr. Hambye, S.J., when he says :

> Being a minority in a closed milieu, and not always well-trained and instructed, it is remarkable that they kept the Faith together with their social status.

But I am not so sure if there will not be arching of many an eyebrow at what follows :

> Had they started early to mix with low castes, they would have lost their social influence and perhaps have disappeared alto-

[2] Yule, *The Wonders of the East*, p. 23.

gether, as happened to Christian communities in other parts of India.[3]

In the race for material prosperity *vis-á-vis* other communities in India, the Indian Christian community is running the danger of losing the race, what with additions to its ranks of poor converts. And, materially speaking, Christians could soon work their way to the top if they are to close their ranks and not allow their energy and resources to be "drained" by recruits who have to be brought up to the social level of the old Christians, at great expense and self-sacrifice. Nor are they an asset to the community, politically, when whatever addition the Indian Christians can make by means of conversions is like a drop in the ocean compared to the majority community which can reckon its strength in millions. But it is the bounden duty enjoined on the faithful by Our Lord Himself, not as a counsel but as a matter of obligation, that we do attempt to carry to our non-Christian brethren a knowledge of Him. Says Bishop L. W. Brown :

> It was in consequence of this position that the St. Thomas Christians, so far as our evidence goes, never attempted to bring their non-Christian neighbours to a knowledge of Christ, and so unto the Christian Church. The Portuguese Archbishop Menezes did his best to create a sense of evangelistic responsibility among the Indian Christians by preaching to the Hindus whenever he could, and the eighteenth century Carmelites had a number of Baptisms from among them every year, so much so that they had to defend their action before the Raja of Travancore, but the Indian Church itself was not aroused to share this work.[4]

The Muslims, who had also attained to a high position, showed in this respect a better sense of brotherhood. The result was that the Christians had only added one more caste to the multiplicity of the Indian caste system. It is because Christianity became a caste that it could offer no challenge to the Hindu mind, which would have otherwise tried to steal its thunder by first trying to understand its principles and then incorporate them into itself. Added

[3] Hambye, "The Syrian Church in India," *The Clergy Monthly*, vol. XVI, p. 386.

[4] Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, p 173.

to this was the difficulty of access to the Christian scriptures, as they were locked up in a difficult language. This is the reason why inquiring minds, like Śankaracharya and Ramanuja, show no influence of Christian thought in their writings, despite the fact that they were fully aware of Christians present in their midst.

When in the fourteenth century efforts were again made to carry the message of Christ to the Hindus, the Friars-Preachers, to whom this arduous task was entrusted by the great missionary Popes of the age, found it difficult to make headway against Islam which had firmly entrenched itself in the country with a vast network of its own missions. Islam had, moreover, the backing of the state, while in the absence of the protection of political power the Christian missioners came to India only to suffer and die for Christ. And when in the course of years it was found difficult to maintain the supply of priests, the missions had perforce to be abandoned.

The fact stands in bold relief that if Christianity survived at all during the 1500 years it is because of the large-heartedness and spirit of tolerance of our Hindu brethren. Apart from the unique service to the community, which the Christians were in a position to render, it is a tribute to the sense of justice, fairness, and magnanimity of the Hindus that they appreciated the loyalty and efficiency of the Christians, and permitted them to rise to the highest posts in the state. Many of the old kings and princelings in Travancore, north of Quilon, and in Cochin, had Syrian Christian ministers (Karyakkars). The Ancheri Christian Karyakkars of the Tekkumkur kings are still remembered and spoken of.[5] The Christians also had a military organization of their own, and a dynasty—the Villiyāṛvattam, ruling near Cochin. The military title of Panikkar is still used by many Syrian Christian families. Karakkunnathu Panikkar, half-Christian and half-Hindu, belonged to a family of military officers who served Cheraman Perumal.[6] It is no mean achievement that the Christians gave a minister to the Vijayanagar empire in the person of Nimeh-pezir, who brought upon himself the abuse of Abd-er-Razzak for cutting down his daily allowance which had been assigned to him by the previous incumbent. From the description of him even by this hostile witness,

[5] Joseph, "Kings and Christians in Kerala," *KSP*, vol. II, series 8, p. 123.
[6] *Ibid.*

Nimeh-pezir seems to have been an efficient administrator who knew how to stop the drain on the treasury.[7]

When, with the discovery of the sea-route at the close of the fifteenth century, Portugal established her maritime empire in India, the missioners secured the protection which they had so long sought in vain. Under the protecting flag of Portugal, the messengers of Christ could safely go about the country preaching the Gospel. The difficulties which they encountered in the native states were all removed by the successful intervention of the Portuguese governors and officers on their behalf. The first step was to prevail on the local rulers to remove the ban they had imposed on the conversion of the humbler classes. This was achieved by means of the treaties which Portugal signed with the country powers. All the same, the converts still laboured under the disabilities of the particular slave or untouchable caste to which they belonged—disabilities which did not attach to them when they changed over to Islam. This handicap to Christianity, in its struggle against Islam, was removed in the early thirties of the sixteenth century, and numerous conversions followed from these humbler classes. Under the Portuguese Padroado the neophytes, however lowly be their origin, were admitted to the same benefits as the Portuguese themselves in the matter of education, economic uplift, and medical relief. After Fr. Miguel Vaz became the Vicar-General, native converts were singled out for preferential treatment in the Portuguese possessions; and outside, the converts were protected from oppression from the powers that were. But the Christians should go down on their knees asking pardon of their Hindu brethren for the vandalism of this ecclesiastic in destroying the temples:

> We humbly beg God's forgiveness and ask pardon too of our brethren who feel themselves to have been injured by us.[8]

From a purely scientific point of view, the hospitals became laboratories for testing the therapeutic qualities of Indian plants and drugs in the repertoires of the Indian physicians. Garcia da Orta, justly styled "the Father of Indian Botany"—inwardly a Jew (and it matters little if he was), began his scientific researches

[7] Major, "India in the Fifteenth Century," p. 41.

[8] Speech of Paul VI at the opening of the 2nd Session of the Vatican Council, *Tablet*, October 5, 1963.

during this period which culminated at a later day in the production of his celebrated *The Simples and Drugs of India*. The results of these experiments were transmitted to Europe and helped to enrich the international pharmacopoeia. The *Roteiro da Viagem da Vasco da Gama* of Alvaro Velho combines interesting information about spices and drugs of the East with a glossary of terms current in the language spoken at Calicut; while the penetrating remarks of Barbosa, in his book, which has rightly been called the Portuguese Periplus, the painstaking details supplied by Tomé Pires and Duarte Pacheco in their work *Suma Oriental* and *Esmeraldo da situ orbis* light up a whole oriental landscape.

The missioners were now confronted with a new problem. Being small in number, they could not keep a strict watch on their neophytes so that they may not relapse into their former superstitious practices. Nor was it possible for them to instruct the growing number of converts in the tenets of Christianity.

This was the problem to the solution of which Francis Xavier had to apply himself when he arrived in India on May 6, 1542.

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